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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES."—Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

The Message of the East

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ered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office
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REPORTS.

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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SELF-CONQUEST.

By Swami Paramananda.

Once a General approached Lord Buddha and addressed Him thus: "There is one doubt which still lingers in my mind, O Blessed One, and that is concerning duty. I am a soldier. I am appointed by the king to enforce his laws and wage his wars. The Blessed One who teaches kindness and compassion to all living beings, does He permit the punishment of the criminal? Does He declare that it is wrong to go to war for the protection of our homes, our wives, children and property? Does He teach the doctrine of complete self-surrender, so that I should suffer the evil-doer to do what he pleases and yield submissively to him who would take away violently what is my own? Does the Blessed One maintain that warfare waged for a righteous cause should be abandoned?" To this Buddha replied: "He who deserves punishment must be punished, and he who is worthy of reward must be rewarded; yet at the same time the Teaching is that non-injury, love and kindness to all living beings must be observed. These injunctions are not contradictory. One should be loving and kind; yet one should recognize that the criminal must be punished for the crimes he has committed. His suffering comes not through the ill-will of the judge, but on account of his evil

doing. His own acts have brought misfortune upon him. Therefore let him not harbor thoughts of hatred in his heart; let him consider that this is the fruit of his own action; as soon as he will understand that, the punishment will purify his soul and he will no longer lament his fate, but will rejoice in it."

The Blessed One then continued: "Warfare in which man tries to slay his brother is lamentable, but those who go to war in a righteous cause, after exhausting all means to preserve the peace, are not blameworthy. He should be blamed who is the cause of the war. Struggle there must be in this life, for all life is a struggle of some kind. He who struggles in the interest of self — that he may be great or powerful or rich or famous — will have no reward; but he who struggles for righteousness and for Truth will have great reward, for even his defeat will be a victory." Then Lord Buddha, addressing the General, said: "O General, he who goes to battle, even though it be in a righteous cause, must be prepared to be slain by his enemies, for that is the destiny of warriors; and should this fate overtake him, he has no reason for complaint. But he who is victorious should remember that all earthly things are fleeting and transitory. Whatever his success, however great it may be, the wheel of life may turn again and bring him down to the dust. If, however, he is moderate; if, extinguishing all hatred from his heart, he lifts his down-trodden enemy up and says: 'Come now, let us have peace and be brothers;' he will gain not mere transitory success, but a true victory, the fruit of which will remain forever. Great is success, O General; but he who has conquered self is a greater victor. The doctrine of the conquest of self is not taught to destroy the souls of men, but to preserve them. He who has conquered self is more fit to live and to gain

victories than he who is the slave of self. He whose mind is free from all delusion regarding the self, he will stand and not fall in the battle of life."

Christ says: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his own soul?" The conquest which any human being seeks in the external world is insignificant in comparison with that which lies within his own self; and until he has conquered his inner kingdom, all outer conquests must be fleeting and uncertain, for his own unwise actions may at any moment cause his ruin. Even though the world may regard him as a conqueror, even though he may consider himself invincible, he is not a conqueror in the spiritual sense so long as he is willing to give his soul life in exchange for any material advantage. He may gain the whole world, but it will profit him nothing. In all the lofty spiritual messages of the great teachers one ideal stands out above all others, — that each one must rouse himself and bring out what is best in him. He must learn to stand up and hold himself above nature, for a man who constantly obeys nature like a bond slave gradually loses the power of independent action, and life sooner or later must prove joyless and burdensome to him.

The tendency of the average mind is out-going. All its ambitions and interests are directed towards external things; but however much it may gain materially, there is always something lacking to make its happiness complete. Take, for example, the life of Alexander the Great. The world has rarely seen such a conqueror, yet within him there remained something unconquered and this often tormented him when there was no outward cause for unhappiness. Such is the universal experience. Should we not try therefore to acquire something more satisfying? Should we be content

to lead a life of slavery, obeying the impulses of our physical nature? This question must eventually arise within every heart; no one can evade it. Each one must face and answer it. It is the starting-point of all religion.

As we are now, we have very little control over ourselves; even this body which we call ours refuses to obey us and we are constantly driven hither and thither by the undisciplined forces of our nature. But one who has perfect control over the body is not made restless by his physical energies; instead of distracting him, they serve to bring him serenity and freedom, for they become constructive, not destructive elements in his evolution. The Lord Krishna declares in the Gita: "He indeed is a truly happy man who can withstand the impulse of greed, lust or anger even before he is separated from this body." And this represents a greater manifestation of power than when we make another person obey us. The man who desires to rule must begin by ruling his own self. He must prove that he is the master in his own dwelling-house. Instead of allowing his physical organism to dictate his course of action, he must make every part of his body subordinate to his will.

We all have a certain amount of power within us; but when this power is dissipated or ungoverned, it brings an unhealthy condition of mind and body. Disease more often comes from misdirection of the life-force than from lack of it. We allow ourselves to fall into a negative state and gradually hypnotize ourselves into the belief that we are without power or will. But the Great Ones constantly remind us that if man is to attain his freedom, he must awaken and raise himself by his own self; for his own self is his true friend and his own self can be as much his enemy as an external foe. Therefore they tell us: Let no one lose hold of himself, but let each one lift himself, for who else

can save him? Even a Divine Incarnation cannot save one who is without the will to be saved and devoid of the energy necessary to follow His example and precepts. A certain degree of self-reliance or faith in our higher Self is essential for our spiritual regeneration. Each soul is inherently divine, for it has within it that which is part of the Infinite. Why should we not exert ourselves and seek to find That? Why should we let our mind remain in a negative state and believe only in the forces which are working on the surface? No one can ever attain the supreme goal until he has become conscious of his higher Self. Man seems like a double being. There is one man, — the eating, drinking, sleeping man, the man of physical limitations: this man has only a little power and little capacity. And there is another man dwelling within, who has greater capacity, greater power, who is all-wise, all-loving. It is this man whom we want to awaken. The surface being, who constantly identifies himself with physical conditions and makes himself believe that he has no power to conquer, to know, to overcome obstacles — that man must be dropped. Nor does this mean self-torture or self-annihilation, it means rising above limitations. It is not that the physical man must be destroyed; not so; but the causes of those lower impulses in us, which lead us to hate or strike in anger or do any unworthy act, must be rooted out. This is not achieved by destroying our eyes, ears or any organ by which we may perform evil deeds. We must go behind the sense organs to find the real cause of evil in us. The senses are merely instruments and when properly controlled, they become powerful aids towards our spiritual advancement. "Through the practice of austerity, man may deaden the feeling of the senses, but longing still lingers in the heart; all longings drop off, when one has attained the Highest."

The little man, the man who sorrows, who grieves, who feels constantly that he is a helpless mortal, that man must expand and gain another vision by which he can realize his freedom. The Upanishads give a very beautiful illustration showing the relation between the lower man and the Higher Self. They are like unto two birds sitting on the same tree of life. One hops from branch to branch trying to gratify his desire by tasting the different fruits of the tree; the other sits calm, majestic and free from desire. As the first bird moves about tasting the sweet and bitter fruits and experiencing pleasure or disappointment, joy or sorrow, he suddenly beholds that other bird of like plumage sitting serene and ever-conscious of his true nature. As he gazes at it, his delusions fall away from him and he realizes his oneness with that higher being. Until man becomes master of his lower nature, he can never gain that lofty vision which sets him free; therefore he must rise step by step until he attains it. He must deal first with what is nearest and most definite, his physical body. He must see how far he can make this body obey him, — his hands, feet and all his senses. Let him next try to make his mind obedient to him. Let him subdue both body and mind and make them instruments in his hand to work out his freedom.

This is how we must begin in our conquest of self. We must watch over our bodily activities and strive to avoid all unnecessary expenditure of energy. With every one there are certain automatic movements of the hands, feet, or other members of the physical organism which continue even when we think that we are lying or sitting still. These should be checked, as they represent a waste of life-force. The Yogis overcome this habit by the systematic practice of *Asanam* or posture, learning to relax every muscle and then training the body to remain motionless in some fixed position.

This enables them to conserve their energies and also prepares them for higher spiritual pursuits. Another cause of waste lies in the unwise use we make of our vital energies. Needless talking is one of the most usual forms of this waste and often results in nervous exhaustion. Uneven and impulsive use of our forces, leading to extremes of activity and inactivity, is another. This must be overcome by steadfast practice of moderation or balance in all our bodily habits, even the most insignificant ones. We must exercise conscious control in our eating, drinking, talking, walking, sleeping, in our work and recreation. This will enable us eventually to gather up our bodily forces which are now being dissipated through lack of proper control and direction and unite them into one strong whole.

Next our mental forces, which at present run hither and thither unrestrained, must be brought into subjection. As the first step in this task we must try to cultivate the faculty of discrimination. We must not follow blindly every impulse that rises in our mind, but we must learn to reflect and to distinguish between what is fleeting and what is lasting, what is essential and what is non-essential, between what is pleasing to our bodily appetites and what is wholesome for our soul. The next step is to keep our mind fixed on the path chosen by our discriminative faculty. Thus firmly holding our thought develops in us the power of concentration, without which we can never hope to gain victory over our lower nature. This may seem a difficult task, but it is possible to every human being who strives with determined will and perseverance. From the very outset of our spiritual life we must root out the negative thought that we cannot do anything. Once for all we must shake off this notion and learn to believe that we can do even what seems impossible — not in any spirit of arrogance,

however, thinking that we can do because we possess individual power, but because we are part of God, because God dwells within us and all things are possible unto Him. This should be our constant thought, until we gain a hold over our little self and put down our lower propensities which veil the true vision of our higher nature.

Christ, Buddha and other Illumined Souls are often called Masters. Why? Because they conquered in themselves that which must be overcome, that which is the source of all fear, jealousy, hatred and ignorance. It is because they thus conquered that they are Masters. And being masters of themselves they alone can be masters of men. If we wish to attain this state of mastery we must make our own self obedient to our will. It is not an arrogant man or a man with strong muscles who can expect to gain freedom, but a man who reflects, a man who governs his appetites, a man who lives in moderation, a man who has power to forgive, to love even his enemies, for he is the stronger man. The power of resistance is good, but the power of non-resistance is higher. As long as we have the feeling that someone is attacking us, that a man is our enemy, we must protect our interests. But there may come a time when, through the expansion of our nature, such feelings will disappear and we shall know that nothing can touch us. One may strike us or speak angry words, but our understanding will place us so far above the blow or the insult that no impulse to retaliate will rise in us. And this is called non-resistance. When our lower nature no longer asserts itself in us, whatever may be the provocation, then self-conquest is complete.

This is indeed the loftiest thing man can accomplish; for then his kingdom is not confined to a little plot of land, but he carries his kingdom wherever he goes. Always is

he the master. No external condition can disturb him, therefore he lives in eternal peace and happiness. So long as our own thoughts, ambitions and unsatisfied desires haunt us and make us restless, we know that we cannot find either freedom or peace, even by going into the jungle. Self-conquest alone will give us that for which all men are seeking. Let us then lay hold on the sword of wisdom and the shield of perseverance, that we may fight with undaunted courage and gain victory over our only enemy, the self.

SELECTION FROM THE MAHABHARATA.

Translated from the Sanskrit.

[NOTE.—The Mahabharata is one of the two great Sacred Epics of India and is supposed to have been composed about 1400 B. C. It contains two hundred and twenty thousand lines, the English translation of which fills twenty-six volumes. The title means "Great India," and it deals chiefly with the prolonged conflict between the royal families of the Kurus and the Panchalas. Pandu was the king of the Kurus and on his death a brother, Dhritarashtra, with his queen Gandhari, ascended the throne. Dissension at once arose between the five sons of Pandu and the hundred sons of Dhritarashtra. Yudishthira, the eldest of Pandu's sons, was noted for his righteousness and purity; the second son, Bhima, was so mighty of stature that he could uproot a tree and use it as a staff; Arjuna, the third brother, was the foremost archer of India. Among Dhritarashtra's sons, Duryodhana was the leader and because of his father's blindness had been made ruler. Jealous of his cousins' greater merit and glory, he made various malicious attempts to destroy them and at last succeeded in exiling them to the forest for thirteen years. When the term of banishment was

over, the five Pandava brothers returned and asked for a small portion of their kingdom. Duryodhana refused. Sri Krishna and all the wise men of the court did their utmost to dissuade him from his mad course; and the king, as we see in the following passage, at last appealed to his heroic wife, Gandhari, to try to save their son from ruin.]

Hearing the words of Krishna, King Dhritarashtra lost no time in addressing Vidura, who was conversant with all the dictates of virtue. And the king said: "Go, O child, unto Gandhari, possessed of great wisdom and foresight, and bring her hither! With her I will entreat our wicked-hearted son! If she can pacify his evil mind, we may yet be able to act according to the words of our friend Krishna! It may be that in speaking words of peace, she may still succeed in pointing out the right path to this foolish one, afflicted by avarice and having wicked allies. If she can avert this great and dreadful calamity about to be occasioned by Duryodhana, it will then conduce to the attainment and preservation of happiness and peace for ever and ever." Hearing these words of the king, Vidura, at Dhritarashtra's command, brought thither Gandhari possessed of great foresight. And Dhritarashtra then addressed Gandhari and said: "Behold, O Gandhari, this thy son of wicked soul, transgressing all my commands, is about to sacrifice both kingdom and life in consequence of his lust of sovereignty! Of wicked soul and little understanding, he hath like one of uncultivated mind left the court with his sinful counsellors, disregarding his superiors and setting at naught the words of his well-wishers."

Hearing these words of her husband, that princess of great fame, Gandhari, desirous of what was highly beneficial, spoke these words: "Bring hither, without loss of time, that kingdom-coveting and sick son of mine. He that

is of uncultivated heart and sacrificeth both virtue and profit, doth not deserve to govern a kingdom. . . Kshattri then, at Dhritarashtra's command, and his mother's also, once more caused the vindictive Duryodhana to enter the court. Expectant of his mother's words, the prince re-entered the court with eyes red as copper from wrath and glistening like those of a snake. Beholding her son, who was treading in a wrong path, Gandhari rebuked him severely and spoke these words to bring about peace:

"O Duryodhana, dear son, attend to these words of mine that are beneficial to thee as also to all thy followers, words that thou art competent to obey and that will conduce to thy happiness! Duryodhana, obey thou the words of thy well-wishers, those words which that best of the Bharatas — thy father — and Bhishma and Drona and Kripa and Kshattri have spoken! If thou makest peace, thou wilt by that render homage to Bhishma, to thy father, to me and to all thy well-wishers, with Drona at their head! Nobody, O best of the Bharatas, succeedeth by his own desire alone in acquiring and keeping or enjoying a kingdom! One that hath not his senses under control cannot enjoy sovereignty for any length of time! He that hath his soul under control and is endued with great intelligence, he only can rule a kingdom! Lust and wrath wean away a man from his possessions and enjoyments. Conquering these foes first, a king bringeth the earth under his subjection! Sovereignty over men is a great thing. Those that are of wicked souls may easily desire to win a kingdom, but they are not competent to retain a kingdom when won. . . . He that desireth to obtain extensive empire must bind his senses to both profit and virtue; for if the senses are restrained, the intelligence increaseth as fire increaseth when fed with fuel. If not controlled, these can even slay their possessor

like unbroken and furious horses capable of killing an unskillful driver.

"One that seeketh to conquer his counsellors without conquering his own self, and to conquer his foes without conquering his counsellors, is soon vanquished himself and ruined. He who conquereth his own self first, taking it for a foe, will not seek in vain to conquer his counsellors and enemies afterwards. Prosperity favoreth greatly that person who hath conquered his senses and his counsellors, who inflicteth punishment on transgressors, who acteth after deliberation and who is possessed of wisdom. Lust and wrath that dwell in the body are deprived of their strength by wisdom, like fishes ensnared in a net with close holes. That king who knoweth well how to conquer lust and wrath and avarice and boastfulness and pride, can possess the sovereignty of the whole earth. That king who is desirous of gaining wealth and virtue and vanquishing his enemies, should always be engaged in controlling his passions. Impelled by lust or by wrath, he that behaveth deceitfully toward his own kinsmen or others can never win many allies. Uniting thyself with those heroic sons of Pandu, who are well endued with great wisdom, thou canst, O son, enjoy the earth in happiness! . . . That man who is not obedient to the wishes of wise and learned friends, always seeking his prosperity, only gladdeneth his enemies.

"O son, there is no good in battle, no virtue, no profit! How can it bring happiness then? Even victory is not always certain. Do not set thy heart, therefore, on battle! . . . Give unto the sons of Pandu what is their due, O chastiser of thy foes! If thou wishest to enjoy with thy counsellors even half the empire, let their share then be given unto them! Half the empire is sufficient to yield the means of support unto thee and thy counsellors! By acting ac-

cording to the words of thy well-wishers, O Bharata, thou wilt win great fame! A quarrel with the sons of Pandu, who are all endued with virtue, who have their souls under complete control, who are possessed of great intelligence and have conquered their passions, will only deprive thee of thy great prosperity! Dispelling the wrath of all thy well-wishers, rule thou thy kingdom as becometh thee. O mighty of Bharata's race, give unto the sons of Pandu the share that belongeth to them! Persecution of the sons of Pandu for full thirteen years hath been enough. Quench now that fire within thee which hath been fanned by lust and wrath. Thou that covetest the wealth of the Pandavas art not a match for them. It is never seen in this world that men acquire wealth by avarice, O son. Give up thy avarice then and desist."

AWAKE, ARISE!

Fragment of Poem by Swami Vivekananda.

Then speak, O Love!
Before thy gentle voice serene, behold how
Visions melt, and fold on fold of dreams
Departs to void, till Truth and Truth alone
In all its glory shines.

And tell the world:
Awake, arise, and dream no more!
This is the land of dreams, where Karma
Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts,
Of flowers sweet or noxious, and none
Has root or stem, being born in naught, which
The softest breath of Truth drives back to
Primal nothingness. Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let Visions cease.
Or if you cannot, dream then truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

RAJA-YOGA.

By S. E. Waldo.

Raja-Yoga is divided into eight principal steps and for that reason is often called the "Eight-fold" Yoga. It requires to be closely followed and regularly practised, and it promises those who are faithful and persevering that the goal will surely be reached. When the power of complete concentration has been gained, and when this is joined to the highest form of meditation, the result is what is called *Samadhi* or superconsciousness. This philosophy teaches that there are three stages, one above another, in what we ordinarily know as consciousness — the sub-conscious, usually called instinct; the conscious; and the super-conscious. The range of consciousness is very limited even on the physical plane. Mr. Edison once called attention to this fact in a published interview. Speaking of the small range of vibrations that the human being can perceive as sound and color, he said that between the highest number of vibrations that can be heard and the lowest number that can be seen, is an immense range of several hundred thousand about which we know absolutely nothing. In the same way, all those vibrations which number less per second than in the lowest sound audible to human ears, and all those greater in number per second than the highest number visible to human eyes as color, are entirely beyond our knowledge. Hence there is a whole undiscovered universe right in our very midst and possibly far more wonderful and beautiful than the one we know. This is no metaphysical dream, but a sober, scientific deduction from known facts.

The psychology upon which Raja-Yoga rests, claims that all that today is called instinct, as well as all subconscious action in our bodies, comes from what was originally the effect of conscious action. This action, having

been repeated and repeated until it ceased to require conscious direction, became as it were automatic. Indian psychology even goes farther and declares that by proper means and persistent effort all these sub-conscious actions may again be made conscious actions. Then this psychology posits a third stage beyond and above consciousness proper. These three stages, it says, differ from one another only in degree and grow naturally out of one another. They are like the three degrees in the vibrations we call light. When light waves are too slow, we cannot see them and we say it is darkness; when they are too swift, the light becomes too intense to be visible and again we say it is darkness; yet the one unseen stage of vibration is not like the other, save in its effect on us. These vibrations which are too rapid to affect our vision, cannot occupy the same place in the scale as those which are too slow for us to see; in like manner, the super-conscious state is not like the sub-conscious, it is not the state of the stone and the mineral, but something above the highest conceivable stage of what we call consciousness.

Naturally there can be in language no words to describe this state in any way; nor can we imagine it, because imagination, or the faculty of imagining, is itself confined to experience. We may combine the forms of our experience in the wildest and the most impossible ways, but the resulting images will still consist merely of variations of what we have seen and known. There have been, in all ages and in all lands, men who have claimed to have reached this super-conscious plane; and their testimony about it agrees in a remarkable manner, considering the wide differences of race and creed and intellectual development which separated them. On one point all agree, and that is that there is something to be reached by the human mind higher than

any material perception and higher than even mind itself. What that something shall be called is not a matter of perfect agreement, but that it is bliss and life supreme all admit. The Hindu Rishis and sages of the dimmest antiquity tell of this state. Buddha reached it and called it "Enlightenment," "Nirvana," "the sum of all delights." The Mohammedan Sufis attained it; the Christian mystics, ancient and modern, also reached it; and from one and all the testimony concerning it unanimously claims that it is a state of transcendent happiness.

If then we believe that there is such a state, the next question is, do we wish to gain it? If we do, are we sufficiently desirous of reaching it to pay the price of attainment? All things desirable have to be paid for and the most desirable of all has perhaps the highest price. No one can give that transcendent happiness to us. Each must win it for himself and must pay for it with the concentrated effort of earnest purpose and devoted endeavor. For some the task may be shorter than for others, but for none is it easy and by none is it lightly to be entered upon.

The practice of Raja-Yoga begins with certain physical trainings, from which it rises to mental control. A rigid system of morality of the highest order has to be strictly adhered to. All the Christian virtues in their loftiest form are requisite, while added to even these are some that are not usually inculcated by any system of Western ethics. There is no royal road to success. We are put, as it were, at the foot of a tremendous staircase and we must climb it step by step to reach the top. There are no elevators in Raja-Yoga. If it be objected that the task is too difficult, it can be said that there are other ways for divine realization less arduous and equally sure. Only those who find this method preferable need choose it. There are some

natures to whom difficulties are but added incentives, and to such Raja-Yoga offers a field worthy of their efforts. To strong, brave spirits who are willing to subject the body to the mind, to forego mere physical gratification for the pleasures of mental investigation and conquest, who are capable of perseverance in the face of any discouragement, and who see in the goal before them that which more than all else is to be desired: to such Raja-Yoga appeals in the most forcible manner, offering as it does an explicit method of procedure, a method which has been verified many times by its followers and which tells those who undertake it: "All that has been done can be done again; what any man ever accomplished, that another man can also do."

There is no miracle and no mystery. The road is clearly marked out, and even though perhaps steep and difficult, it leads surely to the mountain top, to that grand realization which is the goal of Raja-Yoga. It is a great mistake to suppose that Raja-Yoga is in any way a "Secret Doctrine." It most emphatically is not and was never intended to be such. In India, where it seems to have been known and taught for over 4000 years, it did in the process of time fall into the hands of those who, to serve their own selfish ends, strove to make a mystery of it. In doing this they injured the system itself, by incorporating into it many new ideas that lessened its dignity and simplicity, thus bringing discredit on the whole system. It is now being freed from these accretions and is being presented again in its original purity. The teachings of Patanjali are studied instead of the later commentaries, which in many instances confuse and mislead more than explain. The Aphorisms of Patanjali have been several times translated into English and are well known to all students of Oriental Philosophy. Though it might appear that some of the re-

sults claimed in these aphorisms are super-natural, it must be clearly understood from the outset that the Yogi denies all possibility of such a thing. He maintains that there is no super-natural. There are gross manifestations with which we are all familiar; then there are finer manifestations known only to special students; and beyond even these are still finer, subtler manifestations, to perceive which it is necessary to acquire suitably subtle powers of perception.

Raja-Yoga is designed to cultivate these subtle powers of perception, and to enable us to use them in the study of things beyond the reach of our senses as ordinarily developed. All this, however, is perfectly natural and in no way occult or mysterious. It has become a fashion to decry certain studies as being "occult"; as if, on that account, they were dangerous or wicked. Occult simply means hidden or concealed, so that really everything we do not know is occult for us; but if we never sought to penetrate into any of the hidden subjects and in that way to learn to understand them, all progress would soon be at a standstill. It is one of the curious sides of human nature that it resents new ideas as a positive insult and injury. History is full of instances of the sad fate that often awaits the man who dares to bring forward a new theory which contradicts generally-received opinions. Galileo suffered for presuming to assert that the earth moved, and it is only because the days of the Inquisition are over that the prophets of the evolution theory have escaped persecution. Even in this twentieth century of the Christian era it is still possible to find people who do not believe in evolution.

Raja-Yoga has especially to do with the meditative side of religion. It strengthens the will by continuous and persevering drill. It cultivates the imagination, which is really a very important faculty and one which ought to be made

useful to man. All prophets, poets, inventors and discoverers have been men of great imagination. It spurs men to put forth tremendous efforts to realize the pictures presented by the imagination. The thing that is necessary is to train this faculty, instead of letting it run wild, as is often the case with most people. Only the mind can serve as the instrument with which to analyze itself. The mental powers, when properly guided and directed inward upon the mind itself, will illumine its workings and enable us to comprehend them. The next step is to control these powers so that we can direct them as we will. The mind will then become like a mighty searchlight in our hands, the rays from which we may throw where we desire and so bring all things internal under minute observation. All the knowledge in the world has been gained by mental concentration. It is the only key which unlocks nature's secrets.

Raja-Yoga is designed to teach us how to attain the basis of belief, how to reach the only real religion. Every human being has the right and the ability to seek and to realize true religion; and if he perseveres in the search, he must succeed. The best help we can have here is strength. We must exercise our reason and judgment and have unbounded faith and hope. Then with energy and steady practice and calm composure we shall surely reach the goal; we shall surely realize our oneness with the Divine, which is our real Self. What is there in religion higher or truer than this Divine Realization?

The soiled mirror never reflects the rays of the sun, and the impure and unclean in heart who are subject to *Maya* (selfishness and ignorance) never perceive the glory of the Lord. But the pure in heart see the Lord as the clear mirror reflects the sun. Be holy, then. —*Sri Ramakrishna.*

THE STORY OF DHRUWA.

From the Sacred Writings of India.

Suniti was the wife of an ancient Indian king, but being childless she persuaded the king to take another queen, who bore him a son to whom the throne was promised; while Suniti, through the urgent insistence of the younger queen, was exiled to a hermitage in the forest. One day the king, hunting in this same forest, came unexpectedly upon her retreat; and beholding again her pure illumined face, full still of love for him, he took her once more into his heart and of this passionate reunion was born the child Dhruwa. Hot jealousy now burned in the mind of the younger queen and so menaced the safety of the new-born and lawful heir to the throne, that the king, grown anxious, sent both mother and child far away to live in a secluded cottage on the edge of a dense forest. Here the little boy grew, knowing naught of the outside world save the faint echo brought perchance by a wandering holy man on his way through the forest to some sacred shrine. Peace hung over the cottage like a cooling shadow and God seemed very near.

The folding and unfolding of the great white blossoms on the lotus pond at sunrise and at sunset, the rustling of the night wind through the overhanging palm trees, the singing of the thrush, or the roar of the lion in the far depths of the jungle: these were the sights and sounds of Dhruwa's little world. And so he lived for seven quiet years close to the heart of his mother, whose whole life had woven itself in and out around the life of her beloved son. Then one day, coming suddenly to her, he asked: "Where is my father, Mataji (revered Mother)?" And she told him of the distant court where the king lived and ruled.

"Could I not go to him, Mother?" he asked again.

"Yes, my child," the queen answered, but a tremor of

undefined apprehension shot through her. "Yes, dearest little one, you may go. But not today. Tomorrow."

And on the morrow Dhruwa set out with a solitary guard to make his way to the distant capital. Through villages and forest lands he went, along hot stretches of open road, past temples and lotus-covered temple tanks, but scarcely his eye rested on all these new pictures, for his thought was bounding ahead to join the unknown father at the journey's end. At last he arrived at the palace gates and, running past guards and courtiers, he flew to the audience chamber and threw himself into his father's arms. The king was overjoyed. During all the seven years he had never ceased to yearn for his exiled son and now the child had come of his own accord to lay his love and devotion at his feet. Fondly he caressed and questioned him. But as he did so, that younger queen, mother of the falsely chosen heir, entered the hall. With angry disdain she glanced at the little boy and then, reminding the king of his early promise, she spoke such bitter threats that the king, affrighted, put down the child as if he feared the curse might blight him. Dhruwa looked full at his father, then stooping he touched the king's feet, kissed the steps of the throne, beckoned to his guard and silently went out.

The journey home seemed long and weary. Often he asked the guard to carry him; a great sorrow weighted his little limbs and bore down upon his aching heart. At last he reached the cottage and lifting the lath-strung curtain, stood before his mother. Hour after hour she had watched, praying for the safety of her son. He was here and her heart leaped. Yet what had happened? A shadow had fallen on the happy laughing face. The child was gone and a grave thoughtful boy had come back to her. Joyfully she fed him the fruits and cakes made ready for him.

When he had eaten, she asked him of his journey and he told her all that had taken place. A moment of sad silence followed; then lifting sorrowful eyes to her face, he asked:

"Mother, is there anyone stronger than my father?"

"Yes, my son," she answered tenderly, "the Lotus-eyed One."

"Where does He dwell?" the child asked eagerly.

"Far, far away," she answered vaguely, as the vision of the great Divine Shepherd, Krishna, rose before her. "There in the forest where the wild creatures live, there dwells the Lotus-Eyed One."

Dhruwa heard in silence. A sense of awe welled up in his child heart. Then out of the depths of his being sounded a voice, calling "Come to Me!" "Come to Me!" Was it the voice of the Lotus-Eyed? In the stillness of the night the call grew louder, louder, until the boy could bear it no longer. Rising from his bed, he crept to the side of his sleeping mother. "Unto Thee, O Lotus-Eyed, I give her," he murmured with clasped hands and prayerful lips. Then out into the darkness he passed and on into the denser darkness of the jungle.

Suddenly there stood before him a great creature with hungry eyes and panting breath. "Are you the Lotus-Eyed?" asked Dhruwa without fear and the lion slunk away ashamed. Then came a dark furry thing with heavy tread. "Are you the Lotus-Eyed One?" again asked the child, and the bear crept back into the bush. Still the voice sounded: "Come to Me! Come to Me!" And Dhruwa hurried on. Then out from the tangle of the jungle appeared a holy man, Narada himself, who, gently laying his hand on the eager little head, said: "Thou seekest the Lotus-Eyed, my child? I will show thee where and how to find Him. Come, little one, sit here beneath this tree, clasp thy hands thus

and close thine eyes. Repeat now the Lord's Name. If thou canst fix thy whole mind and call with thy whole heart on Him, surely wilt thou find the Lotus-Eyed!"

In humble obedience Dhruwa took his seat as he was told and began to repeat the sacred Name. No muscle moved, the senses were at rest, only the holy sound echoed through his being. Like rising waves it swept over his awakening consciousness, carrying him further and further inward, to that secret place where in every heart dwells the Lord, the pure Source of Bliss Eternal and Eternal Strength. There he found the Lotus-Eyed.

REPORTS.

The Christmastide was marked by various gatherings and services at the Vedanta Centre of Boston. On Christmas Eve the house was brightly illuminated, with rows of candles in all the lower windows and in the chief window on the corner of the Parkway an altar to the Christ Child and the Virgin, which was decorated with flowers and plants and many burning candles. The Chapel and Library were also hung in green garlands and filled with blooming plants. At eight o'clock a special service was held consisting of music, meditation and an address by Swami Paramananda on the true lesson of Christmas. At its close, all those present gathered in the Library, where each was given a flower and some sweetmeats. On the following afternoon there was a Christmas tree in the Vedanta Community House, to which a number of children and members of the Centre were invited. Presents were distributed and a spirit of true joy and cheer pervaded the atmosphere.

At the regular Service on Sunday morning the Swami delivered a lecture on "Christ the Redeemer," which closed his course on the Great Saviours. As in all previous lectures

he brought out in clear relief the fundamental unity in the teachings of all the Divine Incarnations.

* * *

At the invitation of the Rev. E. M. Cosgrove, Swami Paramananda delivered a lecture before the Second Unitarian Church of Somerville on Sunday evening, December 19th. His subject was "The Message of India to the West" and all present showed the keenest appreciation of what the Swami had to tell them regarding the great religious teaching of the Indo-Aryans. Many questions showing both interest and sympathy were asked at the close of the lecture. On the following Sunday evening Sister Devamata spoke in the same church on "Woman in India."

* * *

The Vedanta Centre of Boston will celebrate its seventh Anniversary on Wednesday evening, January 5th, at 8 o'clock. All friends of the work are cordially invited to be present.

* * *

Swami Prakashananda has taken charge of The Vedanta Society of San Francisco and has begun to hold regular Sunday meetings and the usual week-day classes. It is expected that the work will grow rapidly under his direction.

* * * *

A Relief Fund for the sufferers in India from flood and famine has been started by the Boston Vedanta Centre. Reports published in previous numbers of the Message have told of the noble and tireless work which the Ramakrishna Mission has been conducting for many months past in their effort to relieve the terrible distress prevailing in certain districts of Bengal. All those desiring to help in this work of love may send their offerings to the Centre. Even a small amount may save the life of a starving child or mother. We beg to thank those who have already contributed.

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The Message of the East

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FEBRUARY 1916

Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE

1 Queensberry St., Boston, Mass. U. S. A.

SINGLE COPIES, 10 Cents $1.00 A YEAR

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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" *13th*	*Symbolism and Devotion.*
" *20th*	*Self-Knowledge.*
" *27th*	*Unity of Religions.*

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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ROBERT BROWNING AND THE VEDANTA.

By Sister Devamata.

(Extract of Address delivered before the Boston Browning Society.)

In considering how far Browning voices in his poems the spirit of the East, we must first of all remind ourselves that Spirit knows no boundary lines. Truth is neither of the East nor of the West. And he who sees the Truth is neither of the East nor of the West. He is of God. That Vision lifts him above time and place. It leads him even to transcend himself. But although this supreme Vision is open to all men, few there are in any age who attain it in fullness. When, however, there comes a rift in the cloud and a few gleams of the Light shine through, flooding the heart and soul of some man, then we have a genius such as Robert Browning. Yet it is only a rift. The illumination is not complete. Shadows still linger; hence the strong contrasts which nearly always mark the character of geniuses, contrasts which are difficult for the ordinary mind to reconcile.

When that rift grows wider, allowing a broader beam to pass, then there rises a prophet like Isaiah or Jeremiah, a towering figure, who at one moment stands on the heights lost in the wonder of God's glory and at the next descends into the valley to lament the wickedness of men; a great soul tossed on the ocean of dualism, seeing always two, light

and darkness, good and evil, and warning men to strive for the one and flee from the other. When, however, the cloud is rent and the whole Vision comes, then the world gains a Messiah or a Seer, mighty ones like those illumined Rishis, who from the silent heights of the Himalayas gave to mankind the lofty revelations set down in what we know as the Vedas. Their light never wavers. For them there is but One, there are never two. They have looked upon That which lies behind both good and evil and their whole consciousness is filled with That. They sit calm, "Serene amid the half-formed creatures round," as Browning declares in "Paracelsus"; or again in "Cleon":

> ". . . . Those divine men of old time
> Have reached, thou sayest well, each at one point
> The outside verge that rounds our faculty,
> And where they reached, who can do more than reach."

The power and need of such Teachers is a familiar theme in Browning's poetry, for he claims that only the man who has touched God is fitted to refresh and regenerate mankind. It is through such, as he says in "Pompilia," that "God stooping shows sufficient of His light for those in the dark to rise by." The Vedic Seers dwell with especial emphasis on the necessity in the world at all times of great souls who can say as John said in "Death in the Desert," "I saw"; for they alone keep men's faith alive. What made the scribes stop and harken to Christ's words? Because He spoke with authority; He had seen. What made it possible for Buddha to go out and conquer Asia? Because He had seen. Always must there come God-men of supreme Vision to break through human crystallization and show man once more his Divine nature. Therefore is it said in that great Eastern Scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita: "Whenever religion declines and irreligion prevails, whenever there is a predominance of vice and a decline of virtue, then I (the Lord) manifest

Myself, for the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil and for the preservation of religion."

It was because the Indo-Aryan Sages recognized so clearly the power of the personal vision, the strength of an apostolic succession of living teachers, that in ancient India higher knowledge was always transmitted by word of mouth. Man reads into the written teaching his own limitations, they said, and interprets it according to his own partial understanding; but when he listens to an Illumined Soul speaking even the humblest word, the force of the teacher's spiritual insight so quickens his perception that he is able to discern a new and deeper meaning in the truths spoken. Hence the ultimate revelations of the Vedas are called *Sruti* (that which is heard), while the minor Scriptures are known as *Smriti* (that which is written down). I remember, during the first weeks of my stay in India, being awakened every morning at half past four by the deep-toned notes of a man's voice and the light soprano of a little child's answering voice, and I learned that it was the teacher who came each day at that hour to rouse his young pupil and help him learn line by line the rolling majestic verses of the Vedas, which through all his life would be fixed indelibly in his memory.

Those great Wise Men of the East knew well, as Abt Vogler says, how "to build, broad on the roots of things." That is their salient characteristic. In the Rig-Veda it is recorded that the disciple came to the Master and questioned: "What is that by knowing which all else becomes known?" He did not ask for facts or information. He asked to be taught the basic principle of life and knowledge. And all the Vedas following this earliest Scripture were composed as answers to that fundamental question, to know That which lies behind all knowledge. But such knowledge

is not the ordinary knowledge which we gain from books. It is not the knowledge of the university campus or the library. Browning himself has described it in "An Epistle":

> "So here—we call the treasure knowledge, say,
> Increased beyond the fleshly faculty—
> Heaven opened to a soul while yet on earth,
> Earth forced on a soul's use while seeing heaven."

But for this revelation higher perceptive powers are necessary, the Vedanta declares. Man has within him three states of consciousness,—the sub-conscious, the conscious and the super-conscious; or as Browning expresses it in his "Death in the Desert":

> "Three souls which make up one soul: first, to wit,
> A soul of each and all the bodily parts,
> Seated therein, which works, and is what Does,
> And has the use of earth, and ends the man
> Downward: but, tending upward for advice,
> Grows into, and again is grown into
> By the next soul, which, seated in the brain,
> Useth the first with its collected use,
> And feeleth, thinketh, willeth,—is what Knows:
> Which, duly tending upward in its turn,
> Grows into, and again is grown into
> By the last soul, that uses both the first,
> Subsisting whether they assist or no,
> And, constituting man's self, is what Is—
> And leans upon the former, makes it play,
> As that played off the first; and, tending upward,
> Holds, is upheld by, God, and ends the man
> Upward in that dread point of intercourse,
> Nor needs a place, for it returns to Him
> What Does, what Knows, what Is; three souls, one man."

According to the Vedic teaching, the sub-conscious mind is the mind of the body, the mind that does. It is the mind which makes the heart beat and the lungs breathe, which draws us back automatically from pain and pushes us toward pleasure. Above this is the intellect, the mind that knows, by which man perceives, classifies and associates ideas, thus gaining what we ordinarily call knowledge. Still beyond is the super-conscious or the spiritual mind, by which man apprehends being directly. In this state of consciousness he no longer reasons or infers. He sees face to face

what is. The hidden laws of God become apparent to him and he learns to identify himself with the Universal. As Browning describes it in "Sordello": "Divest mind of e'en thought and lo God's unexpressed Will dawns upon us."

To attain this state of spiritual illumination is the goal held out by the Vedic Sages to every living being; for through it alone will a light be kindled in the heart by which man will perceive his true nature and the true nature of all things. Every man is "a god though in the germ," we read in "Rabbi Ben Ezra"; and in "Sordello," man "must fit to the finite his infinity." The soul, in Browning's conception of life, cannot stop short of the Infinite, the *Sat-Chit-Anandam* or "Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute and Bliss Absolute" of the Vedas. Therefore, he tells us in "Sordello" again, "Let essence, whatsoe'er it be, extend, never contract." With him, as with the ancient Indo-Aryan Seers, all salvation or ultimate attainment can be reached only through the full revelation of the soul to itself. When that supreme moment arrives and the veil drops from Spirit, then, the Svetasvatara-Upanishad declares: "As a mirror clouded by dust shines bright again after it has been polished, so is the embodied one satisfied and free from grief after he has beheld the real nature of his Self. And when by means of the real nature of his Self, he sees, as by a lamp, the real nature of the Supreme, then having known the Eternal God, who is beyond manifested nature, he is freed from all fetters."

With the realization of the soul comes necessarily a realization of the mutability of all finite things, and throughout Browning's poetry this is perhaps one of the strongest notes sounded. In "Fifine at the Fair" he writes:

> "'Truth inside, and outside, truth also: and between
> Each, falsehood that is change, as truth is permanence.
> The individual soul works through the shows of sense,
> (Which, ever proving false, still promise to be true)

Up to an outer soul as individual too,
And, through the fleeting, lives to die into the fixed. . . .
Truth sets aside speech, act, time, place, indeed, but brings
Nakedly forward now the principle of things
Highest and least.'
Wherewith change ends."

And again:

"Each has a false outside, whereby a truth is forced
To issue from within. . . . Life means, learning to abhor
The false, and love the true, truth treasured snatch by snatch."

This is a clear presentation of the Vedic doctrine of *Maya*, so often misinterpreted as delusion, but which actually means change. Nothing can be real or permanent except the Changeless Cause, because It alone is Self-existent. All other existence is relative, hence ever-shifting. "All things suffer change save God the Truth" are John's words in "Death in the Desert." Our sense-perceptions are based wholly on contrast. We know cold only in relation to heat and what may feel hot at one moment seems cool in relation to something hotter. Light becomes darkness and darkness light, blue may seem purple and purple red according to what is placed beside it. Absolute color or sound or feeling is nowhere to be found in this kaleidoscope of phenomenal manifestation. We are unable even to define them save by relating each to something else. There can be nothing fixed in matter, because for material things fixity means death. Life on this plane depends on change and motion, on continuous circulation, perpetual ebb and flow. Yet behind this ceaseless play of *Maya* is a light that never flickers, an Absolute which holds the relative, a Real which lends to the changing form through which It shines that alluring show of reality which so easily deceives the unseeing eye. Thus speaks Browning in "Rabbi Ben Ezra":

"Fool, all that is, at all,
Lasts ever past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What enters into thee,

That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.

He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed."

With the force of a still mightier vision the Vedic Sages of old proclaimed again and yet again that Ultimate, Unchanging Reality, "from whence all beings are born; by which, when born, they live; unto which they go"; and this ancient Sanskrit prayer was ever on their lips: "O Thou Supreme Light of the Universe, Lead us from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to light, from death to immortality." "The unreal hath no existence and the Real doth never cease to exist," Sri Krishna declares. "The Seers of Truth know the nature and final ends of both."

A recognition of the eternity of the soul and the mutability of all material things, however, does not call for a morbid under-valuation of the things of this world, nor does it demand a foolish torturing of the flesh. Browning felt that. The joy he took in living was a wholesome sign of his real vision. He exclaims:

"Every day my sense of joy
Grows more acute, my soul (intensified
By power and insight) more enlarged, more keen."

And David sings to Saul:

"How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the senses forever in joy."

Although he was not deceived by the fleeting nature of the created universe, he saw none the less its value in that it served to teach men to seek for the enduring and everlasting. We only know a fixed point by that which moves, and it is by studying day by day these things which crumble in our hands that we come to know that which is permanent. One

of the signs of a lofty soul is to see greatness in little things, to see purity even in the impure, to perceive beauty behind that which appears ugly. There can be no doubt that Browning possessed that deeper sight. He saw the beautiful in all things, "the spiritual life around the earthly life." There was no fact of existence that did not hold a message of inspiration for him. Why? Because he had learned to relate each thing that he beheld to the One behind. Every great poet or artist refers all to the Ultimate Beauty, as every Seer refers all to the Ultimate Truth. And no man can be a monist without being an optimist. He who sees the One in the many, unity in diversity, who beholds God everywhere, must find all things beautiful and may seem at times to revel in what to the ordinary mind appears base and unlovely. May that not explain why some of Browning's lines fall with a shock on uncomprehending ears?

None but a great soul could respond to the Higher Vision as Browning's soul responded; and no other could maintain so remarkable a balance between the Divine and the human, between flesh and spirit, between earth and heaven. Everywhere one finds a natural intermingling of the two; sometimes the scale may seem to tip a little to the fleshly side, then suddenly something swings it back to the spiritual. This is one of the greatest proofs of his genius, for higher vision never leads to the elimination or destruction of any element of life; it enables us to rate each at its proper value and maintain a balance among all. This is also the basis of the Vedic science of Yoga or spiritual development. The very word, from the same root as the English "Yoke," makes this plain; for man invented a yoke that he might balance his burdens and thus carry them more easily. Yoga, we are told in the Gita, only brings illumination to that man who observes moderation or balance in all his activities.

This does not mean that at every moment he must stand at a neutral central point; but that when he swings to this side or that, he will have such control over all his forces that in an instant he will be able to correct his deflection and regain the middle point, that point where all things are perceived at their true value.

If soul persists and material things perish, there rises the question: "What is death?" Browning gives answer, "New life comes in the old life's stead"; and "My foot is on the threshold of boundless life." Again in "At the Mermaid":

> "Must in death your daylight finish?
> My sun sets to rise again."

Did be believe in reincarnation? He does not voice it with the same definiteness as Tennyson or Wordsworth, but lines such as these seem to indicate it; and Paracelsus at the moment of his passing exclaims:

> "If I stoop
> Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
> It is but for a time; I press God's lamp
> Close to my breast; its splendor, soon or late,
> Will pierce the gloom. I shall emerge one day."

More distinctly does the idea come in "Evelyn Hope":

> "Delayed it may be for more lives yet.
> Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few,
> Much is to learn, much to forget
> Ere the time be come for taking you."

No thoughtful mind can look deep into this ever-moving panorama of manifested life and explain its variations and inequalities on any other logical ground than that of Karma and Reincarnation. Each germ of life is working out its own salvation according to the natural law of cause and effect. It was not enough that nature should evolve the best machine. Man must go on evolving something higher within that machine; and if eons were allowed to evolve the body, how cruel would it be to grant him a paltry seventy years to save his soul.

"I search but cannot see
What purpose serves the soul that strives, or world it tries
Conclusions with, unless the fruit of victories
Stay, one and all, stored up and guaranteed its own
Forever, by some mode whereby shall be made known
The gain of every life."

Browning writes in "Fifine at the Fair."

Vedanta teaches that each human being is the arbiter of his own destiny. He can choose his own course to attain ultimate perfection. There is no mother whose indulgence is so untiring as the great Divine Mother of the Universe. She gives to every child as much time as he wishes to go to school. She never suspends or expels him. She lets him work or play, loiter or hasten on his way; but he must inevitably suffer if he breaks the law, just as a child cannot escape the smart and sting if he burns his fingers. She knows full well that, as Browning puts it, "Life's inadequate to joy as the soul sees joy"; and because "the soul craves all," every living creature must push on and on, climbing by his mistakes until he attains the farthest height; for "incentives come from the soul's self, the rest avail not."

But what is the purpose of it all? Browning answers in "Death and the Desert":

"God's gift was just that man conceive of Truth
And yearn to gain it."

For "The Absolute Truth is bliss itself; on attaining It the soul feels happy," the Taittirya-Upanishad declares. And where is the Truth to be found? Again the answer comes in "Paracelsus":

"Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
From outward things, whate'er you may believe.
There is an inmost centre in us all,
Where truth abides in fulness; and around,
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
This perfect, clear conception which is truth.
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Binds it, and makes all error; and to know
Rather consists in opening out a way

Whence the imprisoned splendor may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without. . . .
Therefore set free the soul alike in all,
Discovering the true laws by which the flesh
Accloys the spirit!"

The only reason for geniuses to come, for prophets and Saviours to come, is to remind man that he has the same power within himself; that he too can go to the origin of things; that within his own heart lies dormant the song of the poet, the vision of the prophet, the glory of the Saviour. To awaken each living thing to this mighty fact sounds the cry out of the Vedic past: "Arise! Awake! Seek out the Illumined Ones and gain understanding. Having known That (the Divine Spirit) man escapes from the mouth of death." And taking up the note, the inspired voice of the poet Browning calls to the world of today:

"Hold on, hope hard in the subtle thing
That's spirit."

LEARNING AND WISDOM.

A learned Brahmin once went to a wise king and said: "Hear, O king! I am well versed in the Holy Scriptures. I intend to teach thee the Sacred Book of Bhagavatam." The king, who was the wiser of the two, well knew that a man who had really studied the Bhagavatam would seek more to know his true Self than to gain honor and wealth in a king's court. He replied: "I see, O Brahmin, that you yourself have not mastered that book thoroughly. I promise to make you my teacher, but go first and learn the Scripture well." The Brahmin went his way thinking within himself: "How foolish the king is to say that I have not mastered the Bhagavatam when I have been reading it over and over for all these years." However, he read through the book carefully once again and appeared before the king.

The king made him the same answer and sent him away. The Brahmin was sore vexed but thought that there must be some meaning for this behaviour of the king. He went home, shut himself in his closet and applied himself more than ever to the study of the Scriptures. Little by little their hidden meaning began to unfold before his mind, and the vanity of running after riches and honor, kings and courts, power and fame, grew plain to his unclouded vision. From that day forward he gave himself up entirely to the worship of God and never returned to the king. A few years after, the king thought of the Brahmin and went to his house to see why he had not come back. Beholding him all radiant with Divine light and love, he fell upon his knees and said: "I see that thou hast now arrived at the true meaning of the Scriptures. I am ready to be thy disciple if thou wilt condescend to accept me." *Parable by Sri Ramakrishna*

ADDRESS AT SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY

By John Spencer Clark.

In responding to Swami Paramananda's request to say something pertinent to this occasion, the seventh anniversary of the establishment of the Vedanta Centre in Boston, I am led to ask myself the question "Why am I here?" And perhaps I can best respond to the request by telling you as briefly as possible, not only why I am here, but also why I am happy to be here and bear testimony to the high, ennobling spiritual and ethical influence that is radiated in generous measure from this profoundly religious mission.

I came here, as I shall presently tell you, in pursuit of truth in the higher departments of human thinking, and from a sincere desire to know the nature of the Message from the East to the occidental mind. Let me say in passing, that I was brought up under the influence of the strict-

est of orthodox teaching, and that on reaching my majority in the fifties of the last century, I rejoiced to see dogmatic Christianity at the height of its power and influence. As an organized system of religious thought it had maintained itself against the attacks of science and it dominated the religious thought of the occidental mind. Indeed, I could heartily join, without the slightest tinge of religious self-sufficiency, in the fervent missionary hymn "From Greenland's icy mountains," believing in all sincerity that we Christians were the only people who had been "enlightened with wisdom from on high"; and that we only had the true "lamp of life" which other peoples and races were calling upon us to share with them.

The main affirmations of this system of religious thought were these: an infinite eternal God, a personal Being, the Creator of the Heavens and Earth and all that in them is; that 4004 years before Christ this God had created the universe and man out of hand, and that this was the beginning of all things; that man disobeyed his creator, and as a punishment he and his posterity were condemned as degenerates to a life of want, sin and suffering here on earth, and to an eternal life of pain and suffering in the life beyond; that residing somewhere in the created universe was an evil spirit, a personal devil or Satan, animated with intense hostility to God, and the inspirer of much of the sin and wickedness that inflict mankind; that God in his mercy had taken pity on the fallen human race, and had sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, to be a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of mankind, to be in fact a Redeemer to those who would accept Him as their Saviour and follow His teachings; that somewhere in the created Universe was a veritable Heaven where sin and sorrow were unknown, and where the redeemed of Earth would enjoy an eternity of bliss in the presence of

God, Christ and the holy angels; that somewhere in the created Universe there was a veritable Hell where the unredeemed of Earth would endure an eternity of pain and suffering in the company of Satan and kindred spirits; that as a means of making known to man God's purposes and man's duties God had revealed them fully in the Holy Scriptures, every word of which was divinely inspired and must be accepted as ultimate truth, transcending in certitude all the results of man's experiential knowledge.

These dogmas had had an eventful history, and as the fundamentals of religious belief they underlaid the religion of Christianity no matter into what sects or churches its believers were divided over matters of detail. At the middle period of the last century Christian theologians and teachers of all sects, rejecting the ever-increasing significance of the revelations of science, were insisting upon the absolute truth of these dogmas with more earnestness than ever. Believing that by virtue of these dogmas they held the keys to all truth, they assumed a supremacy of knowledge, and they attempted to ignore, to deny, to condemn the revelations of science whenever these revelations ran counter to their dogmatic affirmations.

But the three decades between 1840 and 1870 witnessed the establishment of a group of scientific truths regarding the Cosmic Universe and man's place in it, which, united to the truths of gravitation and the indestructibility of matter already established, presented a challenge to the fundamental dogmas of Christianity such as had never before been presented, and opened an entirely new era in the development of religious and philosophic thinking in the Christian world. Let me state briefly the nature of these discoveries and the order of philosophic and religious thought to which they gave rise.

First: Geological researches clearly showed that the Earth was in no sense created out of hand and set going a few thousand years ago; the evidence was indisputable that it was part of the solar system and had existed for countless ages and was ever in a process of development into more complex forms of phenomenal manifestation in conformity to the action of cosmic forces invariable in their mode of operation. In short, it was shown that the Earth was but a part of a much greater whole and that it was the outcome of a process of evolution.

Second: Physical researches had established the truth that permeating the Cosmic Universe was a universal power or energy which was never increased or diminished; and that the various forces known as light, heat, electricity, magnetism, chemical affinity, etc., were but forms of this universal energy and were convertible into one another without any loss whatsoever. Thus was established the great cosmic truth, the Persistence of Energy, a truth which is the foundation of all physical science. In a philosophic sense this is a manifestation of the Infinite Power which holds the Universe in order. Without it there would be chaos. Like matter, its ultimate source or origin is unknown.

Third: Geological and Paleontological researches had revealed the truth that man had been an inhabitant of the Earth for hundreds of thousands of years; and that instead of his having been specially created 4004 years before Christ and having become a degenerate, the evidence from paleontologic remains and comparative physiology was conclusive, that he had ascended through the action of natural forces through vast periods of time from an animal ancestry to the stage of human barbarism. From this stage all the humanistic sciences join in the tale of his further progress until there was presented in historic time barbarous man,

impelled by egoistic feelings on the one hand, and by environing conditions, which brought forth altruistic feelings and a sense of dependence on the other hand developed into a stage of semi-civilization. From this point we have a historic record of his gradually moving upward, sloughing off his animal nature as his altruistic feelings and his sense of dependence increased, until we have as the present outcome, modern civilized man in his various stages of philosophic, religious and social culture. Man with his rational mind was also seen to be a product of evolution.

Fourth: A century of research into the credibility of the dogmatic claim that the Christian Scriptures were a specially inspired message from God to man and therefore transcended man's experiential or scientific knowledge in every particular, had brought forth conclusions from some of the ripest scholars and most reverent of biblical critics, adverse to the claims of dogmatic Christianity. In fact it was shown by some of the ablest scholars and thinkers, that while the Bible was of inestimable value as a collection of religious literature, it could not be accepted as an authoritative revelation from the Source and Sustainer of the Cosmic Universe and man, because of its internal inconsistencies, as well as its marked inconsistencies with the revelations of Divine Power given in the phenomena of the Cosmic Universe and in the life of man. In other words, it was shown by impartial criticism of the Biblical text and by the positive revelations of Science, that the God of Christian theology was too limited, too anthropomorphic in character, to answer for the Infinite Eternal Power which the scientific thinker must posit as the source and sustainer of all things.

A crisis, perhaps the most profound that has ever occurred in the history of Christian thought now existed. All phases of Christian thought were shaken to their founda-

tions. The problems of the Cosmic Universe, man's place in it and his destiny and what lies back of all as Source and Sustaining Power—the ultimate problems of philosophy—were brought to the rational mind for revaluation in the light of man's recently acquired experiential knowledge. Great confusion of thought existed. Scientists and Biblical critics who had ventured to disturb the settled philosophico-religious order of things, came under the fiercest vituperation. Nevertheless, a few fair-minded thinkers sought to organize the truths of Science revealed in the Cosmic Universe and in the life of conscious man, in conformity to some adequate underlying cause, in the hope of being able to present a rational harmony as existing in the ultimate problems of philosophy, instead of a disharmony as presented by dogmatic theology. Among the efforts in this direction the most comprehensive and rational was that of Herbert Spencer, who, in 1860, brought forth the outlines of a new philosophic system based on the positive revelations of Science.

Mr. Spencer seeing that all cosmic phenomena, whether of matter, energy, or conscious mind ran back to some unknown source or ground, assumed as the basis of all rational thinking the existence of some adequate Cause, an Infinite Eternal Power from which all things proceed; a conscious Power the ultimate of all existences, and one which in the nature of its own existence transcended the comprehension of the human mind. He then affirmed that this Infinite Power had revealed Himself in the phenomena of the Cosmic Universe and in the conscious mind of man, and that these phenomena were ever in a process of development from a simpler to a more complex form of manifestation, ever in a process of evolution from a lower to a higher stage of existence all in conformity to immutable law, and

all without waste of matter or energy, and all indicating some ultimate plan or purpose. In view of these ultimate Cosmic truths he further affirmed that it was the highest duty of conscious man to acquaint himself with the conditions of his Cosmic existence, and to conform his life to the laws governing his Cosmic evolution.

In short, here was put forth a philosophic system which posited an Infinite Eternal Power transcending the comprehension of the human mind as the Source and Sustainer of all things, which presented the Cosmic Universe with man's rational mind as its crowning feature, the whole a positive revelation of the Infinite Eternal Power; and which affirmed that this Cosmic revelation of this Infinite Eternal Power was ultimate, and its reverent study the highest duty of man.

Thus was an attempt made to bring into harmony the three ultimate problems of philosophy, at the same time preparing the way for the development of a purer religious faith than the world has yet known. But this attempt at philosophic unity regarding the great problems of existence was indignantly spurned by Christian theologians as the highest form of scientific infidelity. One has only to turn to the philosophico-religious discussions of 1860 to 1880 to see with what ignorance, prejudice and virulence this doctrine of evolution was attacked by the champions of orthodox Christianity. The doctrine, however, had a generous welcome from all branches of Science. In the biological group particularly, investigators had long been checked in their researches by the dominance of the idea of special creations imposed by theology. The doctrine of evolution swept away utterly the idea of special creations, and opened as it were new doors into the phenomena of the Cosmic Universe which yielded fresh and important revelations of

Divine Truth. In the organic, the living world, the phenomena of life were given a new origin and meaning and man, its crowning product, was found to be endowed with innate moral and spiritual consciousness and an aspiring soul. Accordingly he was philosophically rescued from the awful doom of theology and given his rightful place and heritage in the vast eternity of things. Then too, with the passing of the dogma of the special creation of man and his Fall, one of the highest and most inclusive of sciences, that of sociology was born, a science which sets forth the ethical principles which underlie man's social well-being here on earth.

Notwithstanding the opposition of theology, the doctrine of Evolution has had, and is now having, a mighty influence upon the development of the religious thought of the Christian world; and we rarely see an annual meeting of any of the great religious denominations that is not marked by a trial for heresy of some earnest sincere soul who has found it impossible to smother the evidences of Divine Truth writ in the phenomena of the Cosmic Universe and in the rational mind of man, by the bandages of an outgrown dogmatic theology.

But why am I dwelling on these things here, on your seventh anniversary? It is for the purpose of making clear to you why I am with you this evening. About a year ago, I bethought me to visit the leading denominational churches, as well as other places of religious instruction in Boston, for the purpose of noting what change, if any, had been made in the character of religious instruction from that of half a century ago, as a result of the great development of knowledge regarding the Cosmic Universe and man which had come through Science. Let me say that while I found a quite general advance away from over insistence upon

points of doctrine, to emphasis upon ethical conduct and greater tolerance in religious thought, this advance was not accompanied in the churches by any surrender of dogma—that the fundamental Christian dogmas were still maintained as matters of faith, and as the necessary structure for a religious belief. One could not but notice, however, the very perceptible difference in the treatment of the dogmas of the inspiration of the Scriptures, Special Creation, Miracles, the Fall of Man and his eternal punishment from that of half a century ago.

In the course of my peregrinations I came upon your modest mission of the Vedanta; and I confess I was profoundly impressed by the vastness, the rationality, the inspiring character of the philosophic and religious thought here presented. The three great problems of philosophy: God, the Cosmic Universe, Man with his rational mind, were presented as a harmonious unity with infinite possibilities to the ever developing human soul. My mind was taken entirely away from the consideration of the limited personal God of Christian theology, and led to the contemplation of a Divine Being, the Source and Sustainer of all things, transcending in the nature of His existence the comprehension of the human mind. I found the Cosmic Universe presented, not as a fiatistically created Heavens and Earth of recent date, the outcome of will and caprice; rather as an infinite Cosmos of order and law, existing from all eternity, ever in process of evolution to some predestined purpose, the whole a true revelation of the Divine Being, its Source and Sustainer.

Again, I found Humanity presented not as a world of degenerates struggling and suffering under a fearful doom at the hands of their Creator; but as human beings having their origin in the profound mysteries of the Cosmic Uni-

verse; human beings endowed with egoistic and altruistic feelings and with rational consciousness, ever struggling upward; and, through increasing knowledge of the conditions of human life and of the Infinite Power that lies behind, reaching higher and truer conceptions of human life, its duties and its meaning. Then, too, I found here the results of evolutionary science cordially welcomed as truths of the highest order, as positive revelations of the Infinite Power back of all that is; and as ever tending to generate higher conceptions of this Infinite Power as well as firmer convictions of the truth that in human conduct ethics form the basis of all social well-being.

And then I found religion presented not as wholly embodied in the dogmas, creeds, or teachings of any particular religious faith, but as knowledge of the highest import to the human mind, making its way through the various forms of religious faith which recognize, no matter how imperfectly, the existence of a Divine Being, the Source and Sustainer of all things, the necessity of ethical conduct among men and the continuance of life beyond the present. And with all, I found here presented to the Christian mind with great learning and in a fine tolerant spirit, the great similarity, the harmony that exists in the teachings of the great Sages of India and the fundamental teachings of the founder of Christianity. Indeed, it might be said that Krishna, Buddha and Jesus were presented as the great religious teachers of mankind, the Memnon Colossi of the human race; no matter among what people or in what century their feet may be placed, around their brows the music of morning and of evening is forever playing.

To sum up briefly: I am with you this evening because I recognize in the teachings of this place religious instruction based upon man's religious intuitions combined with his

experiential knowledge of the Cosmic Universe and his place in it: the whole a revelation of the Infinite Being, the Source and Sustainer of all things: a Divine Power:

"Boundless inward toward the atom.
Boundless outward toward the stars."

SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY.

The Vedanta Centre of Boston celebrated its Seventh Anniversary on Wednesday evening, January 5th. Despite the inclement weather, there was a large attendance, and the spirit of the gathering was one of warm sympathy and keen interest. The exercises began with a violin solo. Then, after a brief meditation, Swami Paramananda delivered an address, in the course of which he said: As the Centre is setting its foot on the threshold of a new year of activity, we ask all to pray to the Supreme that it may continue its work of helpfulness. The spirit of the present day is to bring the ancient and the modern together. A few years ago it would not have been possible for us, perhaps, to thus gather in the name of a system of thought so foreign to the Western mind; but the time has come when such exclusive ideas can no longer hold people. No longer can we shun or condemn anything on the ground that it is alien and foreign. The revelations of science are helping us to destroy all the barriers bred of narrowness, exclusiveness and prejudice.

The Swami at the close of his Address read a telegram from one of the chief speakers of the evening, the minister of the Second Unitarian Church of Somerville, which ran: "Rev. E. M. Cosgrove has not sufficiently recovered from the grippe to be able to be present tonight. He sends you his most earnest felicitations. He is deeply interested in the noble work of your Mission, and desires to co-operate with you in every possible way, so that the great message

of the Vedanta may strike its root deep into the heart of the West."

Mr. John S. Clark, a profound student of science and philosophy, just now engaged in writing a life of John Fiske, was then called upon and delivered an Address (given in full elsewhere in this number) which made the deepest impression upon his listeners. Mrs. Heisten, the next speaker, told of seeing Emerson's copy of the Bhagavad-Gita, fingered and worn and full of notes, showing how frequently it must have been in his hand, how constant must have been his study of it. Mr. John Orth, the well known pianist and pupil of Franz Liszt, then rose and said:

"I am glad to be here this evening and I feel it an honor to be invited to say a few words on this anniversary occasion. You may ask: 'What do you learn at the Vedanta meetings?' In reply I will try and tell you a little of what these meetings mean to me. First of all, I would say that we hear the fundamentals of life, the foundations of all real attainment explained and set forth in a simple yet masterful manner. It has always seemed to me the greater the Master, the simpler his language. Our leader here is only another exemplification of this fact. We also learn breadth of view. There is no greater obstacle to the progress of the race than prejudice. Where there is prejudice, there is a lack of sympathy, charity and love. Prejudice, it appears to me, is the opposite of broad-mindedness, which means a sympathetic and charitable attitude towards one's fellow-beings. In the summer-time I have sometimes wondered what might be the attitude of a grasshopper towards a caterpillar. The caterpillar might naturally say to him: 'What a frivolous, aimless, empty life you lead. Why can't you be sedate and reposeful, a well-poised, sensible person like me?' The grasshopper retorts: 'But you're such a slow-poke. You'll

never get anywhere at the gait you're going.' How little does he realize what a beautiful creature the caterpillar is destined to evolve into! Being broad-minded, however, they shake hands and part company, each willing the other should lead his own life in his own way.

"Just so the turtle might say to the eagle: 'Here I am delving into the depths of things, while you just fly about in the sky. What a hollow, superficial, useless life!' The eagle answers with disgust: 'Who are you, anyway? You are nothing but a hard-shelled Baptist, an earth-bound materialist at best. What do you know about life—the higher life? Away with you and your dogmas and traditions!' After talking the matter over exhaustively, however, they both come to the conclusion that each one is right as far as he has gone. The turtle begins to see quite clearly that the eagle would never be happy with him in the pond; while it is equally evident to the eagle that even if he put wings on the turtle, as a bird he would not be much of a success. Now if they only could have realized from the start that to Him who made all there is no great and no small, nor high nor low, all would have been well, would it not?

"There is a great difference between knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge is like the green stalk and wisdom is like the flower. I know lots of people who have knowledge but they don't know anything. They don't know how to use their knowledge so they are always making trouble; but people who have wisdom never make trouble. Our friend here has wisdom. I have nothing against knowledge any more than against stalks and leaves; but I want something more—I want flowers."

The Swami closed the programme with a benediction.

Another violin solo followed, during which refreshments were passed, and the evening closed in informal intercourse.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES."—Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

The Message of the East

MARCH 1916

Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE

1 Queensberry St., Boston, Mass. U. S. A.

SINGLE COPIES, 10 Cents $1.00 A YEAR

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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EIGHTH SEASON—1916

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

VOL. V MARCH, 1916 No. 3

When we have subdued our passions and freed ourselves from all doubt and prejudice, the light of Truth will burst on our hearts in all its divine effulgence and purity. And "He who knows the Ultimate Reality, after having become quiet, subdued, satisfied, patient and collected, sees himself in God, sees all in God. Evil does not overcome him, he overcomes all evil. Free from evil, free from stain, free from doubt, he becomes a true God-knower." He then penetrates into the illimitable realm of Truth and realizes the supreme fact that to know God is not only possible for the spirit of man, but is its consummation and eternal life. The sphere of religion then becomes, to quote the lofty words of Hegel: "A region in which the spirit rids itself of its finiteness and relates itself to that which is unlimited and infinite; where its attitude is no longer that of dependence but of freedom; and where the individual has no longer to do with himself, his interests, his vanity, but only with absolute truth. All anxiety and doubt, all petty cares and troubles, all narrow and selfish interests, are left behind on the sandbank of time. In this pure region we penetrate beyond the outward deceitful shows and semblances of the world and behold all things revealed to us, transfigured in the pure light of truth and softened in its halo of eternal rest and peace."

ZOROASTER.

Lecture by Swami Paramananda.

The life of Zoroaster and his teaching take us back to a period of history which is dim to the human mind, because we have to depend more on tradition than on actual historical facts. If, however, we reject everything that is not proved absolutely true by history, there are many noble and lofty ideals which we shall be forced to leave out. How little is historically recorded about the life of Jesus the Christ! In our studies therefore we should follow the example of the Indian swan, who, when a cup of milk mixed with water is placed before it, knows how to separate the milk from the water and drink only the milk. In the same manner we must learn to take the essence and concern ourselves less with material evidence. If we would benefit by the study of the Great Ones we must open ourselves to the inspiring influences shed forth by their lives and words, and seek to apply these in our own life. Sri Ramakrishna tells of two men who went into a mango orchard: one of them busied himself with the statistics of the orchard, counting the trees, the branches, the leaves and the fruit; while the other man went straight to the gardener, made friends with him and gained permission to eat the mangoes. Similarly there are two different types of truth-seekers. One type is always busily engaged in dry intellectual details; the other troubles himself little about historic accuracy but seeks realization of the spirit. Intellectual investigation has its place and can be of great assistance and profit; but when it creates prejudice and limits our scope of vision it becomes a serious obstacle to our higher progress.

From this broader view-point let us now try to study the life of the great prophet of Persia. The Persia of Zoroaster however was a very different Persia from that

of modern times, for the people who lived there at that period were not Semitics but were one of the original groups of the Aryan family. When the ancient Aryans migrated from Central Asia, the earliest settlements about which we know were in India and Persia and these two branches were closely akin in their language, thoughts and ideals. John Fiske writes in his "Excursions of an Evolutionist": "From a minute survey of the languages and legends of this whole region, it has been well-established that the dominant race in ancient Persia and in ancient India was one and the same; that it approached India from the North-west; and that a great religious schism was accompanied by the westward migration of a large part of the community, while the other part proceeded onward, and established itself in Hindustan." There can be no doubt that the Zend spoken by the Aryans who settled in Persia resembles wonderfully the Sanskrit of the Indo-Aryans; and Max Müller declares: "In a wider sense India, or at all events the Aryan conquerors of India, may even claim some share in the ancient religion in Media and Persia, known to us by the Zend-Avesta, the sacred book of the Zoroastrians. The most ancient portion of the Avesta, the Gathas, and the hymns of the Rig-Veda are certainly the products of the same intellectual soil."

The conception of God as One Supreme Deity found in the Avesta is identical with the One Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss of the Rig-Veda. The Iranians (the name given to those ancient Persians) worshipped one God, the Loving Ruler of the Universe, known as Ahura-Mazda; and they possessed the same lofty social and religious ideals as their brothers in India. But after a full tide of culture there nearly always follows a low tide of what we call degradation. Not that the moral and spiritual ideals are

lost, but the people fall into superstition. They lose the spirit of religion and deal with only the letter, the outer forms. This was what happened in Persia prior to the advent of Zoroaster. The wonderful ideals of meditation, prayer, renunciation of worldly ambitions degenerated into laziness and love of material gain. Contemplation became the occupation of indolent beggars who resorted to it as the easiest means of livelihood. The conception of Ahura-Mazda as the One Omniscient, Omnipotent Being was gradually obscured; and evil-worship, devil-worship, black magic, sorcery, and other religious abuses became prevalent.

It was in such a period of eclipse that Zoroaster was born. Great divergence exists in the dates given for his birth, but it is now generally accepted that it occurred in the seventh century before Christ — not long previous to the time when the Jews were carried into captivity, while their return to Jerusalem took place less than a generation after his death. He is also spoken of as a contemporary of Thales and Solon, and we find various Greek and Roman authors alluding to him as the leader of the Magi as well as a very great sage. His family, it is said, belonged to the royal house of Minocheher, one of the most powerful rulers of Persia. Different stories are told of the miraculous character of his birth. One of them recounts that the glory, emanating from Ahura-Mazda, passed down from heaven to earth and abode in the house of Zoroaster's mother, Dughdu, until she was born. It then entered into her and dwelt there until she had attained the age of fifteen, when she gave birth to her first-born, the Saviour of Iran. But prior to his coming, it is related, she shone with such splendor because of the Divine Glory within her that her father believed her bewitched and sent her away into the land of the Spitamas, where in due course she married the

son of the lord of the village in which she was sojourning. This explains the surname "Spitama" which the prophet bore and which signifies "holy" or "sacred".

Many supernatural happenings accompanied Zoroaster's advent, the Avesta and other records tell us. Trees, plants, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, all showed unusual signs of rejoicing; a divine light shone in the house, while Ahriman and his evil demons fled and hid themselves in the nethermost regions. There is also a tradition, as old at least as the time of Pliny, that the child instead of crying as he came into the world laughed aloud. Various cruel attempts were made on his life, we are told. Wicked sorcerers sought to burn him in a great fire but he was miraculously rescued. Then they tried to have him trampled to death by a herd of oxen, but the leading ox stood over the helpless little form and protected it from the feet of the herd. At another time he was thrown into a den of wolves but instead of being harmed he was guarded and suckled. All these narratives show a striking similarity to those told in India of the miraculous escapes of the Baby Krishna from the cruel persecutions of the wicked King Kamsa several centuries earlier.

From his infancy Zoroaster gave evidence of remarkable gifts. At the age of seven he began his education under a wise teacher; and later, we read in certain of the Pahlavi writings, those very sorcerers who had so long plotted against him are openly rebuked and confounded by the young boy in much the same way as Christ put to confusion the learned Rabbis in the Temple at Jerusalem. At fifteen years of age he was given the Kushti or holy thread, which must have been a very ancient Aryan rite marking the second or spiritual birth. The custom still exists in India today, and by the sacred thread every Brahmin boy

at an early age is initiated into the spiritual life, thereby becoming a *Dwija* or "twice-born." From this period Zoroaster manifested an ever-deepening spiritual yearning and distaste for worldly pleasure as well as a growing compassion for suffering humanity, until at the age of twenty "abandoning worldly desires and laying hold of righteousness", to quote the text of the Zat-sparam, he left his father's house and wandered forth to seek new light. "There are no other specific details in Pahlavi literature," Prof. Jackson writes, "to fill up the period from this moment to the coming of the revelation when he was thirty years old. They were undoubtedly the years of meditation, reflection, and religious preparation that correspond to similar periods of divine communings and philosophic introspection in other religious teachers. Parallels might easily be cited. It is to this period of Zoroaster's life that the scholiast of the Platonic Alcibiades apparently alludes when he relates that Zoroaster kept silent for seven years; and it is referred to by Pliny in the statement that for twenty years Zoroaster lived in desert places upon cheese. According to Porphyrius and Dio Chrysostom, he passed his time upon a mountain in a natural cave. The mountain is illuminated by a super-natural fire and splendor. Lightnings and thunders were about the summit of Sinai also, and clouds and thick smoke shrouded its sides, while the base of the mountain quaked violently, when the voice of the Lord spoke unto Moses. The Avesta mentions the 'Forest and the mountain of the two Holy Communing Ones'—Ahura Mazda and Zarathustra—where intercourse was held between the godhead and his prophetic representative upon earth." These years of seclusion in the wilderness disprove conclusively the claims of many who suppose that Zoroaster was against the life of contemplation and renunciation.

It was in his thirtieth year that the first revelation came to him. While standing at dawn on the bank of the river Daiti, he beholds a resplendent figure of the archangel Vohuman (Good Thought) approaching him, bearing in his hand a shining staff. The archangel, after bidding him cast off his mortal garment, leads him before the Lord, Ahura Mazda, and Zoroaster offers his worship to the Deity, after which he goes "forward and sits down in the seat of the enquirers." The prophet then receives the command of the Lord to carry the new Message to the people of Iran. Three times in the same day does the vision come to him. Thus inspired and strengthened the great teacher sets out to accomplish his God-appointed mission. For ten years however he meets only struggle and opposition and then at last succeeds in gaining just one convert, his own cousin. Throughout this time, we learn from the Avesta, the prophet is constantly tempted and assailed by Ahriman, the Evil One or devil of the Zoroastrian Bible; but through his unswerving faith and unfaltering devotion to Ahura-Mazda he overcomes the Tempter, as Christ did in the Wilderness and Buddha under the Bodhi tree.

With the conversion of King Vishtasp Zoroaster entered on a new and more triumphant period of his mission. Like Constantine in Christianity the king became the staunchest upholder of the new Faith. But this was achieved not without toil and persecutions. For two years the prophet strove against bitter priestly enemies at the court, who dominated both king and courtiers; and he was forced to bear imprisonment, denunciation and ceaseless dispute. When however the king became convinced of his supernatural power, he made Zoroastrianism the state religion and even waged holy wars to establish it. The thirty-five years which elapse after King Vishtasp embraces the new religion up

to the time of the prophet's death in the seventy-seventh year of his age mark a period of tireless activity. Records of far missionary journeys are preserved and stories are told of conversions in Greece, India and even in Babylon. But few of these can be authenticated and it is generally believed that most of them were added later by enthusiastic adherents of the faith. There can be no doubt however that the new Message spread in time throughout Iran and probably passed the border into some of the neighboring countries.

What was the Message? Dualism is the characteristic feature of Zoroastrian teaching. Ahura-Mazda, the all-knowing Deity, the Lord of Light, stands on the one hand, while on the other stands Ahriman, Lord of darkness, waging unceasing war against Him. Corresponding with these spirits of Good and Evil, we find an eternal heaven and an eternal hell similar to those of Christian theology. The weapons given to man by Zoroaster with which to conquer the Evil One and attain heaven are Good Thoughts (*Humata*), Good Words (*Hukta*), Good Deeds (*Hvarshta*). Every good thought deals a blow at Ahriman, who is perpetually trying to overthrow us and turn us away from the kingdom of heaven by enshrouding our mind in darkness. When man performs a good deed he strikes another blow at the Tempter, so likewise when he speaks good words. "Turn yourself not away from three best things—Good Thought, Good Word, and Good Deed," is Zoroaster's admonition. "I praise the well-thought sentiment, the well-spoken speech, the well-performed action." All his social, moral and religious ideals are based on this triad of virtues. By "Good Thought" man is able to meditate and commune with his Creator. By "Good Words" and "Good Deeds" he fulfills his duty towards his fellow creatures. "Good

Words" include integrity and truthfulness in all dealings with others. A man who practises this virtue must never break a contract or bear false witness or fail to repay his debts; he must also refrain from hurting the feelings of others and he must foster brotherly love for all his fellows. By "Good Deeds" he is directed to relieve suffering and distress; to help the poor, whether worthy or unworthy; to irrigate and cultivate the soil, to drain the marshy places, to provide food and fresh water wherever needed, and to devote the surplus of his riches to charity.

It is evident from these injunctions that the prophet's chief aim was to bring the spirit of religion into everyday life. The people, who were growing visionary in spiritual matters, were given something tangible to do. The long forgotten ideals of their ancient faith once again blossomed into beautiful realities. It was not a new message that was brought, for the spiritual necessity of purity in thought, word and deed permeates all Ancient Aryan teaching; but Zoroaster gave it with new force and insistance.

"Purity is for man, next to life, the greatest good—that purity is procured by the law of Mazda to him who cleanses his own self with Good Thoughts, Words and Deeds."

"Make thyself pure, O righteous man! Anyone in the world here below can win purity for himself, namely, when he cleanses himself with Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

"Commit no slander, so that infamy and wickedness may not happen unto thee. For it is said that slander is more grievous than witch-craft.

"Form no covetous desire, so that the demons of greediness may not deceive thee, and the treasure of the world may not be tasteless to thee.

"Indulge in no wrathfulness, for a man when he indulges in wrath becomes then forgetful of his duty and good works and sin and crime of every kind occur unto his mind, and until the subsiding of the wrath he is said to be just like unto Ahriman (the devil.)

"Commit no lustfulness, so that harm and regret may not reach thee from thine own actions.

"Bear no improper envy, so that thy life may not become tasteless.

"Indulge not in slothfulness that the duty and good work which thou shouldst do may not remain undone.

"With enemies fight with equity, with a friend proceed with the approval of friends. With a malicious man carry on no conflict and do not molest him in any way whatever. With a greedy man thou shouldst not be a partner and do not trust him with the leadership. With an ill-famed man form no connection. With an ignorant man thou shouldst not become a confederate and associate. With a foolish man make no dispute. With a drunken man do not walk on the road. From an ill-natured man take no loan."

"Thou shouldst not become presumptuous through any happiness of the world, for the happiness of the world is like as a cloud that comes on a rainy day, which one does not ward off by any hill."

"Thou shouldst not become presumptuous through much treasure and wealth, for in the end it is necessary for thee to leave all.

"Thou shouldst not become presumptuous through great connections and race, for in the end thy trust is on thine own deeds.

"Thou shouldst not become presumptuous through life, for death comes upon thee at last and the perishable part falls to the ground."

Such are some of the fundamental commandments of the Zoroastrian faith, which show us how high was their standard of moralty and how erroneous is the prevailing idea in the West that Parsis are mere fire or sun-worshippers. One can as well call the Christians cross-worshippers. A Parsi scholar in referring to this writes: "It is popularly believed that the Parsis are sun-worshippers or fire-worshippers, and thus once more do we stumble up against the old fallacy of confusing the symbol with the idea it represents—the shadow with the substance. In brief, fire is always fire to the Parsis, but it is sacred in so far as it symbolizes the great truth of purification, the divine law. And the fire temples, where fire is kept constantly alight by burning sandalwood and incense, are symbolical and intended to remind them of the wise maxim, 'Try and live a pure life by Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.' This maxim may indeed be said to contain the whole essence and substance of the Zoroastrian teaching." In the Vedic Scriptures also fire is regarded as one of the most perfect symbols of the Infinite because it swallows up all impurities, remaining itself pure and uncontaminated.

Zoroaster's influence did not die with his bodily death but it continued to inspire and glorify his race, lifting Persia to such great eminence among the civilized nations of ancient times that Max Muller even claims that had Darius conquered Alexander the Great at the battle of Marathon, a pure form of Zoroastrianism would have driven out the whole Greek pantheon. From century to century the new faith continued to flourish and gain ground until the Arabs struck it a death blow at the battle of Nehavand in 642 A. D. From that time Persia became a Mohammedan country while a mere remnant of faithful followers of the prophet of Iran, unwilling to adopt the new creed, took refuge on

the western shores of India. Thus driven out from their own soil, they once more found shelter with their Aryan brothers from whom they had parted long before. Here they have lived ever since, freely and independently, building their own temples and continuing to worship their Supreme Deity according to their own ancient customs. The Hindus have not accepted the religion of the Parsis, nor have they tried to influence the Parsis by their own religion, for India has always been the land of tolerance. The very basis of Indo-Aryan civilization indeed is universal sympathy. The Vedic philosophy and religion give a wide platform on which all the different races, creeds, denominations and faiths of the world can stand and recognize the One Divine Spirit as the common Father of all.

Zoroaster is not the name of an individual, just as Christ or Buddha is not the name of an individual; it means a state. Zoroaster signifies "Righteous." Some also give to it the meaning "Holy Singer," one who came and dedicated his life to singing the glory of Ahura, the Lord of Light. The truths which this great prophet brought still live and inspire men; so although we may not know positively from an historical standpoint who he was, what he was, how long he lived, we know that his message of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds not only uplifted his own community or race, but it sounds a note which reaches all races, all peoples. And if we take the essence of that which he gave, we may uplift ourselves and realize that Supreme Spirit, Whom he called Ahura-Mazda and Whose Symbol he proclaimed as Fire. Let us too light an altar fire in our hearts, the Fire of Love and Wisdom, and cherish it with pure thought, good words and right action, that we may be cleansed of all impurity and attain that Highest Goal to which all true religion leads.

THE BATTLE.

Song by Kabir.

(Translated from the Hindi by Rabindranath Tagore.)

Where is the night, when the sun is shining? If it is night, then the sun withdraws its light.

Where knowledge is, can ignorance endure? If there be ignorance, then knowledge must die.

If there be lust, how can love be there?

Where there is love, there is no lust.

Lay hold on your sword, and join in the fight! Fight, O my brother, as long as life lasts.

Strike off your enemy's head, and there make an end of him quickly; then come, and bow your head at your King's Durbar.

He who is brave, never forsakes the battle: he who flies from it is no true fighter.

In the field of this body a great war goes forward, against passion, anger, pride, and greed:

It is in the kingdom of truth, contentment and purity, that this battle is raging; and the sword that rings forth most loudly is the sword of His Name.

Kabir says: "When a brave knight takes the field, a host of cowards is put to flight.

It is a hard fight and a weary one, this fight of the truth-seeker: for the vow of the truth-seeker is more hard than that of the warrior, or of the widowed wife who would follow her husband.

For the warrior fights for a few hours, and the widow's struggle with death is soon ended:

But the truth-seeker's battle goes on day and night, as long as life lasts it never ceases."

CONTENTMENT.

Extract by Swami Vivekananda.

We all find ourselves in the position for which we are fit, each ball finds its own hole; and if one has some capacity above another, the world will discover that too in the universal adjusting that goes on. So it is useless to grumble. If there is a rich man who is wicked, there must be in that man certain qualities that made him rich; and if any other man has the same qualities he will also become rich. What is the use of rebelling and complaining? That will not help us to better things. He who grumbles at the little thing that has fallen to his lot to do will grumble at everything. Always grumbling he will lead a miserable life and every thing will be a failure. But that man who does his duty as he goes, putting his shoulder to the wheel, will see the light, and higher and higher duties will fall to his share.

Duty of any kind is not to be slighted. A man who does the lower work is not for that reason only a lower man than he who does the higher work. A man should not be judged by the nature of his duties but by the manner in which he does them. His manner of doing them and his power to do them are indeed the test of the man. A shoemaker who can turn out a strong, good pair of shoes in the shortest possible time is a better man according to his profession and his work than a professor who talks nonsense every day of his life. Every duty is holy and devotion to duty is the highest form of worship of God. It is certainly a source of great help in enlightening and emancipating the deluded and ignorance-encumbered soul of those who are bound. By doing well the duty which is nearest to us, the duty which is in our hands now, we make ourselves stronger; and increasing our strength in this manner step by step, we may even reach a state in which it shall be our privilege to do the most coveted

and honored duties in life and in society.

Every successful man must have behind him somewhere tremendous integrity, tremendous sincerity, and that is the cause of his signal success in life. He may not have been perfectly unselfish; yet he was tending towards it. If he had been perfectly unselfish, his would have been as great a success as that of the Buddha or of the Christ. The degree of unselfishness marks the degree of true success everywhere.

THE ULTIMATE AIM OF LIFE.

According to the Vedic Scriptures there are four objects for which men strive and struggle during their life on earth. These are discharge of duty, acquisition of wealth, gratification of desire, and *moksha* or the attainment of final liberation from the bondage of matter. This is a fairly good classification of the common aims of human life, but it is evident that all four cannot be held in the same esteem. The fourth one—final liberation—is very properly considered to be the highest and most important, for by it alone can the soul come to know and realize its own divine origin and divine destiny. The other aims of life have all to be held in subordination to this supreme one; but they are not to be ignored or suppressed altogether. There is nothing which is absolutely and in itself wrong either in the love of pleasure or in the love of wealth. To the man who has understanding and who does his duty neither pleasure nor wealth can prove a stumbling block. If he loves wealth, he does so because he knows that when properly used it is one of the most potent instruments for good placed in the hands of man. If he loves pleasure, he also does so because he knows that when it is derived from worthy objects and directed to worthy ends, it is capable of transforming the whole inner nature of

man. Neither will endanger his spiritual well-being so long as he guards unclouded his higher sense of duty, for duty or *Dharma* is the pole-star which guides the soul of man safely and truly across the troubled waters of wealth and desire to the final haven of eternal peace and bliss.

Duty is variously defined in Indian sacred literature. A man's place in life determines what his duty is. The Vedanta recognizes the value of renunciation or asceticism and gives to the order of ascetics an honored place, but it does not claim that the soul's final deliverance and bliss can be achieved by that path alone. It holds that salvation is as possible for the ideal householder as for the ideal *Sannyasin* (one who has renounced); and that while only a few are fit to lead the ascetic life of renunciation, the majority of mankind are intended to live as householders. It also recognizes more than one method of realizing the ultimate aim of life. The path of work (*Karma-Yoga*), of wisdom (*Jnana-Yoga*), of devotion (*Bhakti-Yoga*), and of self-surrender (*Prapatti*) are the chief among those which the Vedanta declares make men blessed and lead them to the final goal of freedom.

Karma-Yoga is the realization of God through works. It consists in the performance of righteous works without wishing to obtain the fruits thereof and with the conviction that such performance of work is itself an act of worship. Every person is born to some definite station and condition in life and is endowed with certain natural capacities and qualities. According as these vary the nature of the work that he has to do in life also varies. But whatever may be the work that a man has to do, he is expected to do it well and without the least attachment to the fruits thereof. It is not held that the work will not produce its fruits and that the worker ought not to live upon them. It is the

selfish love of the fruits of work that is condemned; and who is there that does not know that morality rises only on the ruins of selfishness?

"Every action is right which, in presence of a lower principle, follows a higher; every action is wrong, which, in presence of a higher principle, follows a lower." Such is Dr. Martineau's beautiful, simple statement of the canon of right and wrong; and the practice of Karma-Yoga is intended to train men always to follow the higher principle even in the compelling presence of a lower. The world of work is the world of temptations. It is also the gymnasium in which the human soul is drilled and disciplined that it may gain strength to work out its destiny. The allurements of sin and the pangs of sorrow are powerful factors in determining the shape and use of human life. Unless a man passes through the fiery furnace of active work in the world, the encrusted impurities of his mind and heart cannot be burned away. That sinful or ignorant actions obstruct the knowledge of the real nature of the Soul and God and thereby lead man on through successive births and deaths, is clearly stated in almost every page of the Upanishads. "Every wrong act destroys wisdom"; "When one's nature is purified by works, then wisdom begins"; "Whoever understands the nature of wisdom and work, overcomes death by work and obtains immortality through wisdom." These passages plainly declare that true wisdom comes only after the evil propensities of the heart are all destroyed by the steady practice of unselfish work.

Jnana-Yoga or the realization of God through wisdom is possible to those only who are pure in heart. "We desire, and desire most passionately when we are most ourselves, to give our service to that which is universal and to that which is abiding," says Mr. Balfour in his "Foundations of

Belief." That which enables one to distinguish between what is universal and abiding and what is limited and transient is the wisdom which leads the soul to God. In the "Mahabharata" Sanjaya declares to the king: "He that hath no wisdom and whose mind is shrouded in the darkness of ignorance knoweth not the Lord. . . . Having obtained purity of heart through faith, I have come to know God with the help of the Scriptures." Here wisdom, it is evident, is understood to consist in knowledge of the Supreme resulting from faith and purity of heart. In the same way in which work fortifies the struggling heart against temptations and disciplines human life into proper shape, wisdom enables the aspiring man to perceive the divine purpose of life on earth and points out to him the way to God. To know the nature of God, the nature of soul, and the relation between God and soul is really to know how and for what purpose to live. Not to know how to work well in life means not to be well-equipped for the holy pilgrimage of the soul to the abode of God; and not to possess wisdom means not to know where God's abode is and how one may approach it. As man is now situated his knowledge of the glory and greatness of God must be faint and imperfect; but even such faint and imperfect knowledge is quite enough to make him realize his own littleness and the folly and futility of selfishness. When through wisdom man learns that in God's glorious universe all is law and yet all is love and that the purpose of creation is the abiding salvation of the soul, he at once awakens to the grandeur and the beauty of God's love to man. This realization naturally fills his heart with love to God and thus wisdom leads to love.

Bhakti-Yoga or the realization of God through love and devotion is a theme on which Indian saints and sages have sung the sweetest songs and composed the most soul-enrap-

turing hymns of praise and supplication. Bhakti is regarded by many as the ultimate path. "Two sciences have to be known, the higher and the lower," it is said in the Mundaka-Upanishad; and if, as we have just seen, wisdom leads to the love of God, the higher science may well be the science of this supreme love. In the Bhagavad-Gita, we read: "Only by love and unswerving devotion to Me can I be known in My true nature and entered into. He who works for Me, who regards Me as the Supreme Goal, who is free from selfish attachment and who hateth no living being, that devotee comes unto Me." God must seem the Highest Goal to the devotee; otherwise how can he love Him and Him alone with unfaltering devotion? When the heart of the devotee is fully immersed in the ocean of God's love, he naturally sees his Beloved everywhere and in all things; and all that he does, he does for Him and Him alone. Such a man can have no selfish attachment of any kind, nor can he hate any being. It is not the fear of punishment in hell or in any other place that makes the devotee do his duty. His morality depends on what has been called a "higher religious sanction," which appeals to the motives of love and reverence rather than of hope and fear. "In this higher frame of mind we keep God's commandments because we love Him, not because we hope for His rewards or fear His punishments." We love and revere God and therefore we strive to be like Him, to be perfect even as He is perfect.

Prapatti-Yoga is the method of realizing God by complete surrender to Him. "Thy will be done" is the only prayer which this Yoga knows. "Take thou refuge in Me alone. I will free thee from all imperfections; grieve not": these are the final words or the "supreme secret" of the teachings of the Gita, words which fully embody the spirit

of this path of absolute surrender. According to one of the Indian Sacred writings, this Yoga of "refuge-taking" is six-fold in nature. It consists in "the practice of that which is good, and the avoidance of all that is harmful, in strong faith that God alone is the deliverer, in earnest prayer to Him for protection, in a complete entrusting of the soul to Him for His use, and in the sense of our own littleness." When one throws one's self entirely at the feet of God, one cannot do wrong. The man who has thus taken refuge in God need not be afraid of sin; God works through him and he is free and blessed.

Work, worship, love and surrender all lead to the supreme goal of liberation, in attaining which the soul knows God as a blissful Reality; and knowing Him, "forthwith enters into Him." This does not mean however complete annihilation or submergence as so often supposed by western scholars. On the contrary, when in the state of *Moksha* or freedom the soul becomes united with God, it acquires a fuller and nobler personality, in relation to which all human limitations are abolished and evil is non-existent. Is it possible that knowledge of our oneness with God, the Source of all consciousness and life, could destroy our conscious existence? God does not cease to be God when He is known as the All and the All-in-all. Man does not lose anything of value if he rises above his finite condition to know that he is one with the Infinite. In this world of Divine realization there is no place for evil or imperfection. The realm of ego and moral struggle has been transcended and the Ultimate Goal of Eternal Peace and Blessedness is attained. "He whose passions are quieted and mind perfectly tranquil, who has become one with God, being freed from all impurities, — to such a Yogi comes Bliss Supreme."

DUTY OR RENUNCIATION?

Taken from the Buddhistic Scriptures.

Anathapindika, a man of countless wealth, known to all as "the supporter of orphans and the friend of the poor," was sojourning in Rajagriha when the Blessed One in His wanderings came to a bamboo grove near that city. Anathapindika learning of His presence set forth eagerly to find Him. The Blessed One received him with great kindness and spoke to him many words of loving counsel. Then Anathapindika, having listened reverently, said:

"I see that thou art truly Buddha, the Blessed One, and so will I open to Thee my whole heart. My life is full of work and because of my great wealth I bear a heavy weight of care. But I love my work and devote myself to it with all diligence. Many people find employment with me and depend on me for their livelihood. Now I have heard certain of your disciples praise the life of renunciation and denounce the restless activity of the world. My heart yearns to do what is right and to be a blessing unto my fellow beings. Should I therefore give up my fortune, my home, all my undertakings and like unto Thee go into homelessness in order to attain the bliss of a religious life?"

The Blessed One replied: "The bliss of a religious life is attainable by every one who walks in the noble eight-fold path. He who clings to riches should rather cast them off than allow his heart to be corrupted by them; but he who though possessing riches does not cling to them and uses them aright will be a blessing to his fellowmen. I say unto thee, continue in thy present station and apply thyself diligently to thy many enterprises. It is not life and wealth and power that enslave men, but the clinging to life and wealth and power. The monk who retires from the world that he may lead a life of leisure will gain naught; for a life of

indolence is an abomination and lack of energy is to be despised.

"The law of the Holy One does not require a man to renounce and go into homelessness unless he feels impelled so to do; but the law of the Holy One requires every man to free himself from the illusion of self, to cleanse his heart, to give up thirst for pleasure and to follow the path of righteousness.

"And whatever men do, whether they remain in the world or retire from the world, let them put their whole heart into their task, let them be diligent and active, let them struggle in life without cherishing envy or hatred. If they thus live in the world, not a life of self but a life of truth, then surely will joy and peace and blessedness abide in their hearts."

On another occasion, a great general approached Lord Buddha and said: "I have heard that the Blessed One teaches the doctrine of non-action and annihilation. Pray tell me, Lord, is this true?"

The Blessed One replied: "I teach, Simha, the not-doing of such actions as are unrighteous, either by deed or word or thought; but I teach the doing of such actions as are righteous, by deed, by word and by thought. I teach that all the conditions of heart which are evil and not good, all unrighteous actions by deed or word or thought must be burned away. He who has freed himself from all those conditions of heart which are evil and not good, he who has destroyed them as a palm-tree which is uprooted so that it can never grow again, such a man has accomplished the eradication of self.

"I preach the annihilation of egotism, of lust, of hatred, anger, malice, and delusion; but I do not preach the annihilation of forbearance, love, compassion, charity and

truth. I hold that unrighteous actions are to be condemned whether they are performed by deed or by word or thought, but I hold that virtue and righteousness are praiseworthy and to be sought after."

REPORTS.

The birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated at The Vedanta Centre of Boston on January 27th. The public service took place in the evening and was attended by many friends. Besides music and meditation, Swami Paramananda delivered an address in which he paid glowing tribute to his Master. "Swami Vivekananda possessed a sympathy that was universal," he declared. "His great aim was to break down the barriers of ignorance and superstition that all men might join hands in sympathy and understanding. We feel ourselves impoverished when we stand alone; we grow more and more narrow when we do not seek to unite with others. Swami Vivekananda's ideal of unity included the whole world. He believed that union between East and West would make a new chapter in the history of civilization. He often declared that there would come a day when there could no longer exist a barrier between the two hemispheres. All true lovers of humanity have striven for this; nor have their efforts been wasted. All that they have done has helped to bring men closer together; and each one of us too can give his share in the great task of union. We can all give love and love given with wisdom is a source of great power. Unity was the message which Swami Vivekananda brought to the West and unity was the message he carried back to India. We have not yet reached perfect unity between East and West, but it has started. A current of growing understanding has been set in motion which must bring greater and greater union, and this cannot fail to do much for the betterment of humanity as a whole.

"In religion Swami Vivekananda wanted something tangible. He always said: 'Do something. Do not criticize others, but do something yourself; then perhaps you will find nothing to condemn.' He wanted a religion that was man making, a religion which would produce men of strong character, men who would talk little and do much. He believed that service to humanity was not a charity but a blessed privilege; that anyone should be proud to be allowed to do the least thing for the most miserable of God's creatures; that it was the giver who should feel grateful far more than the one who receives. And so full of fire were his words that young men all over India were inspired to consecrate their lives to the service of humanity; and the large hospitals and other institutions that have grown up in Benares, Kankhal, Vrindavan and elsewhere in India under the direction of the Ramakrishna Mission are all the fruit of his selfless, God-inspired life and teaching."

* * * * *

On the first Sunday evening in February the Swami Paramanda was asked to speak at a very large Congregational Church in East Boston known as the Maverick Church. Fully six hundred people gathered to hear him and listened with remarkable intentness for more than a hour to his broad exposition of the ideal of Universality in Religion as taught by Vedanta. The number of intelligent questions asked at the close of the address showed how closely the Swami's words had been followed and what sympathetic interest they had aroused. This was all the more remarkable in view of the fact that the great majority were hearing for the first time about India from an Indian teacher, having been trained in the orthodox belief that India was one of the dark and unredeemed places of the world. After the meeting a large number personally expressed not only their appreciation but an earnest desire to know more of a teaching which seemed to be so far-reaching and all-inclusive.

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Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE

1 Queensberry St., Boston, Mass. U. S. A.

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.

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Tyndall.

VOL. V APRIL, 1916 No. 4

REINCARNATION.

By S. E. Waldo.

Before entering upon the subject of reincarnation itself, there are a few points which should be made clear. To begin with, reincarnation is a theory or a working hypothesis and is in no way essential to the study of the more important side of the Vedanta philosophy. It is not a dogma that must be believed in order to obtain salvation. The various Yogas or methods of reaching liberation can be pursued successfully by any earnest and sincere follower without his ever having even heard of reincarnation. The *Advaita* or purely philosophical side of Vedanta throws this doctrine entirely out of the question as being at best only an explanation of the apparent, and as having no place at all in the real, which is one and not many. But most people, seeing the variety, find it difficult to grasp completely the idea that all this apparent diversity is not real and that only ignorance makes it seem so. By ignorance is meant what the Vedantists call *avidya* or lack of knowledge. Therefore, while we recognize all this variety, we naturally seek an explanation of it. Before the world today are three main hypotheses by which men endeavor to explain this universe. I take these in the sequence in which they have been held in the West. The Hindus never had a "special

creation" theory, or if they had, it was so long ago that all memory of it has been lost in the mists of antiquity. The acute Hindu intellect could not be persuaded that something ever came out of nothing. But in the West the idea of "special creation" held undisputed sway for centuries and I doubt if even yet it has been wholly abandoned. When the theory of evolution first came before the Western world, it met with violent opposition, because it threatened to destroy all religion by overthrowing the Bible account of creation. It was fought energetically by the Church as blasphemous and had it made its first appearance in the days of the Inquisition, it is easy to guess the fate that would have befallen its upholders. This theory endeavors to account for human development by heredity, and more recently by heredity plus environment. To many this explanation has seemed sufficient and some of the greatest minds of the West have accepted it as satisfactory. To many others, and some of them equally great, the evolution theory as given in Occidental science has not appeared to solve all the problems. In all the hypotheses that one is retained which will explain the greatest number of facts, so a third hypothesis from the East is beginning to gain ground in the Western world, because, while explaining all the facts that the evolution theory does, it appears to cover some ground not accounted for by that theory.

In saying this I am not claiming that the idea of reincarnation is a demonstrable fact; all I wish to show is that it is a satisfactory hypothesis or at least as satisfactory as any other, if really not more so. As may be inferred, I consider that it explains known facts more fully and in a better way than either "special creation" or heredity plus environment. In the latter theory there is no persisting entity of any kind, the deed does not return to the doer.

We are reaping, not what we ourselves sowed, but what our ancestors sowed; and we shall leave the harvest of our actions to our posterity. Now it seems to me that this is the weak spot in the Western evolutionary system as a basis for morality. We have no proof that our predecessors cared in the least about us and why should we care for our successors whom we shall never know? The utilitarian basis for ethics can only make its appeal to altruism, and while this may and does affect some of the noblest natures, it is not very influential with the masses. They demand an ethical sanction which they can understand. Why should men do good that others may reap the benefit? If my existence began when I appeared upon this planet and will end when I disappear from it, manifestly I am chiefly concerned with what happens during the span of this particular existence. Out of it I must get all I can ever know of happiness. Therefore on my idea of what constitutes happiness will my conduct depend. To so act as to extract the greatest amount of pleasure out of my life will naturally become my aim, and how can it be shown to me that if I sacrifice myself for others I shall be made happy thereby?

The theory of evolution is very ancient in the Orient and is the idea universally accepted by the Hindus; only they include in it the theory of Karma and reincarnation. These two ideas are inseparable and really complete each other. For those who believe themselves eternal beings, not born today to die tomorrow, the idea of an eternal past and an eternal future separated by an ever-changing present is the only natural one. We cannot deny either past or future if we would maintain the present; for what is the present but a ceaselessly shifting imaginary line that we draw between the past and the future? With every beginning the human mind demands a "before," and with every ending it

enquires for an "after." Those who really believe that this brief span of life on this earth comprises the whole existence of the human being have no interest in a before or an after, and to them reincarnation is a matter of no moment. Yet those very minds must see that the world does not end when they end; and I should think they would at least wonder what could be that unknown ocean into which the river of life absolutely disappears, and what the source of this endless stream of lives is that we see all around us.

The Eastern mind felt the entire inadequacy of this brief earthly sojourn to make man perfect. The sages of the Vedas arrived ages ago at the conclusion that the whole object of manifestation was to enable man to attain perfection, and they also perceived that a brief span of seventy or eighty years would not suffice to bring man to full perfection. They had accepted as an indubitable fact that man was an eternal being. The very oldest of the Vedas teach that man is immortal and must therefore eternally exist. In this they saw many wonderful differences in the conditions of existence, and not being satisfied to lay the blame of human misery on God, or even on the devil, they felt convinced that man himself must be responsible for the inequalities of earthly life. To say the least, these old sages were brave and honest in assuming the responsibility instead of putting it off on some one else. The old testament Adam begins with putting the blame first on the woman (who in turn passed it on to the serpent), thus leaving himself at the mercy of a power outside of himself and so requiring the intervention of another power to save him from the results of obeying the voice of evil. It seems to me that the system of philosophy that boldly says, "Man himself made these mistakes and man himself can correct them and free himself from their effects" is a higher one and

one that teaches self-reliant strength rather than dependent weakness.

To begin with Karma. The idea of Karma is really the idea of cause and effect carried to its fullest extent. Karma is a word that includes a great deal. It is all we do and say and feel and think; and further, it stands for that invisible something which manifests itself in what we call character. Karma also means that resulting, balanced effect of all our action which determines future existence for us. As all action must produce an effect and as effects are often too far reaching to be immediately felt, the Hindu theory of Karma supposes an endless chain of cause and effect, which produces endless births and re-births to work out the effects. Escape from this eternal sequence is only possible through transcending it by such completely unselfish action as will leave no result to return to the particular actor, who thereby becomes free from all such results and is no more bound by the law of Karma. The idea of reincarnation supplements this idea of Karma by furnishing the necessary time or means for working out the Karmic effects. If we concede that we are immortal beings, we have also to admit that we do not begin when we are born upon this earth or end when we die out of it. Next, when we look around us and see all the varying phases of life, our minds naturally ask, "Why do all these differences exist"? We are forced, in any case, to admit that there must be some cause for existing facts, for no thinking mind can be satisfied to accept a theory of blind chance. In a universe so manifestly governed by law even the grossest materialist scouts any such explanation as blind chance. Law undoubtedly governs everything we know, and the human mind is so constituted that it cannot conceive of an effect without a cause. We may differ as widely as possible as to what

that cause is, but of the fact that behind every effect stands a cause of some kind we are unable to feel any real doubt. All metaphysics is the outcome of the effort made by man to find these causes. Even in the world of physics when we push investigation to its ultimate, the metaphysical is invariably reached. Atoms are as purely metaphysical as souls, possibly more so. The physical taken alone can never explain itself but must of necessity find itself confronted by the unknowable.

Having considered Karma in its aspects of work and the results of work, we come to the idea of reincarnation. It seems to me that this idea of reincarnation would naturally grow out of a recognition of man's eternal nature. The most obvious place to search for the reason of man's being what he is here and now, would seem to be in what he was before. He is, as it were, the harvest of a previous sowing, the growth from a previous seed. This applies not only to the physical body, but to that subtle something which makes each man differ from every other man, that which we call personal identity. The vast differences we find among men cannot be entirely accounted for on the theory of heredity plus environment, nor does that theory even attempt to give any explanation of the vast differences in the condition of men that would satisfy the sense of justice inherent in human nature.

It is no more satisfying to be told that I suffer because of what my parents were than to be assured that my misery is the decree of an all-wise Creator and must therefore be right. The question in the former case then changes to: "Why was I born of those particular parents, instead of any others"? Karma provides a reasonable answer. It tells me: "You were born of those particular parents because you deserved to be; what you made yourself in a former

period exactly fitted you to be the child of such parents; you yourself made your own heredity and now you reap the fruits of your own sowing." This answer satisfies my sense of justice and leads me naturally to resolve to deserve better things another time. At first many object even to entertaining the idea that they themselves are responsible for what they are. We see this in every day life. How much easier do most of us find it to throw the blame of any particular unpleasant experience on anybody or anything rather than on our own conduct? But in the reverse case we are quite willing to claim all the credit of producing agreeable conditions. We are ready to concede that we create our own happiness and rarely think of looking round to find some one to thank for it; but when misery comes, the first thing we do is to put the blame for it on circumstances or fate or anything except our own actions. The law of Karma is the law of perfect justice; and when one has really accepted it, he ceases to blame anyone but himself. But this is not a law of blind fate, because we can change our conduct and so modify conditions. Time is in us; so if we fail to perceive the change in a day or a week or even in a life-time, it by no means follows that the law does not work.

Christianity has recognized in a limited way the idea of present action conditioning future existence, but it takes no cognizance of any past action as the explanation for the present condition. In accepting the decrees of an all-wise Creator as the reason of all existing differences, it did not need to ask for another cause; and to objections that the existing state of things showed partiality on the part of the Creator the reply was that we only thought so because we could not understand His wisdom. In making our conduct here the gauge of our future state, Christianity cuts

off one link in the chain and seeks to make that all. It has posited an endless future but it leaves out of the question a past that must by analogy be equally endless. It has somewhat illogically, it seems to me, given us an eternal existence which has a beginning, or as one might say, a stick with only one end. The circle alone is endless. It may be said to begin for the individual where he begins to recognize it, but in and of itself it must be without beginning or it could not be without end. I do not attempt to cite any authorities in the matter of Karma and reincarnation, because it is not a question of authority but one of reason. That the greater portion of humanity accept this doctrine is not to the purpose. It can only be true for me, if I accept it. If it be true, this law will govern me whether I believe in it or not. If it be not true, no matter how entirely I accept it, I shall not be under its sway. The fact of its truth or falsehood is beyond our belief about it, as that will only influence our own action. If it seems, as it does to me, the most reasonable hypothesis to explain the working of the phenomenal world, we can accept it; but as I stated before, it is not of vital importance one way or the other. The highest philosophy of the Vedanta rises entirely beyond it. When man can realize his true nature, that he is that One Existence which can have no second, he has risen beyond all variety and sees only the unity. He knows that he neither is born nor dies, that he neither comes nor goes, that he is that Eternal, Perfect, Unchangeable Reality and that all beside was but a dream. In the dream certain methods appeared to obtain, but with the vanishing of the dream all the methods and laws that apparently governed it went too and with Knowledge-Absolute all need of question or explanation has vanished for ever.

The whole object of the Vedanta philosophy is to teach

us how to transcend law and be free, so it naturally attaches but little importance to the working of law. All that we can gain from understanding it is a knowledge of the way to pass through it and beyond it. If we are strong enough to rise to this without the preliminary explanation, well and good. Most of us are so constituted that we have to learn to stand before we can run, and in learning to stand we may find these various theories useful as working hypotheses. When we are ready and able to rise beyond them, they will all slip away from us with the rest of the dream. When we can realize that we are and have always been that Freedom Absolute which is our real nature, we have no more need of theories or of work; we have reached the goal. But it behooves us ever to keep in mind the wise words of the Greek sage: "The crown of perfection belongs not to the imperfect." While we can even think of claiming anything, we have not yet realized what we are, that we are the All. Until then, we can be helped by the wider outlook given us by reincarnation. In the words of one writer upon this subject: "The great, the all-important lesson reincarnation teaches is that our powers are infinite, our opportunities eternal, and our goal god-like. Our progress is illimitable, and death but a brief rest in a wayside inn, as we journey along."

Reincarnation and Karma are inseparably connected and these two great laws, rightly and completely understood, show man that he alone is the arbiter of his destiny, that he can no longer attribute his sorrows and sufferings to a mysterious Providence, that he can no longer trust to forms and creeds, but must arouse himself and set himself to correct past errors and learn to know his true nature. Thus by his own acts he can rise on "stepping stones of his dead self to higher things," he can set his face steadfastly in the

right direction and by patient determined effort can realize that he is more than divine, that he is Divinity itself.

THE DIVINE SELF IN MAN.

Selection from the Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad.

"Yagnavalkya," the king said, "what is the light of man?"

Yagnavalkya replied: "The sun, O King, for having the sun alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns."

Janaka Vaideha said: "So indeed is it, O Yagnavalkya. But when the sun has set, what is the light of man?"

Yagnavalkya replied: "The moon indeed is his light; for having the moon alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work and returns."

Janaka Vaideha said: "So indeed is it, O Yagnavalkya. But when the sun has set and the moon has set, what is the light of man?"

Yagnavalkya replied: "Fire indeed is his light: for having fire alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work and returns."

Janaka Vaideha said: "So indeed is it, O Yagnavalkya. But when the sun has set and the moon has set and the fire has gone out, what is then the light of man?"

Yagnavalkya replied: "Sound indeed is his light, for having sound alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns. Therefore, O King, when one cannot see even one's own hand, yet when a sound is heard, one goes towards it."

Janaka Vaideha said: "So indeed is it, O Yagnavalkya. But when the sun has set and the moon has set and the fire has gone out and the sound is hushed, what is the light of man?"

Yagnavalkya said: "The Divine Self indeed is his light; for having the Self alone as his light, man sits, moves about, does his work and returns. . . .

"He who dwells within all beings, whom all beings do not know, whose body all beings are, and who rules all beings within, he is thy Self, the ruler within, the immortal.

"He who dwells within the eye, whom the eye does not know, whose body the eye is and who rules the eye within, he is thy Self, the ruler within, the immortal.

"He who dwells within the mind, whom the mind does not know, whose body the mind is, and who rules the mind within, he is thy Self, the ruler within, the immortal.

"He who dwells within the seed, whom the seed does not know, whose body the seed is, and who rules the seed within, he is thy Self, the ruler within, the immortal; unseen but seeing, unheard but hearing, unperceived but perceiving, unknown but knowing. There is no other seer but he, there is no other hearer but he, there is no other perceiver but he. This is thy Divine Self, the ruler within, the immortal."

You see many stars at night in the sky but find them not when the sun rises; can you say that there are no stars in the heaven of day? So, O man! because you behold not God in the days of your ignorance, say not that there is no God.

As the water and its bubble are one: the bubble has its birth in the water, floats on the water, and ultimately is resolved into water; so the individual ego (Jivatman) and the Supreme Spirit (Paramatman) are one and the same. The difference is in degree, the one is finite and small, the other is infinite; the one is dependent, the other independent.

—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

MORTALITY AND IMMORTALITY.

By Sister Devamata

By a strange distorted logic the world associates mortality with life and immortality with death. So long as man is living here he is called a mortal, when he dies then he becomes immortal. Can we prove that beyond the death of this body there is something which lives and speaks to us, we seize upon that as a proof of immortality. But if the departed speaks, if he thinks, if he makes known conditions and states, he must have a body, more subtle perhaps, but still a material garment. No man speaks without a tongue, no man thinks without a mind, no man can describe states that are not connected with matter, for only matter is subject to states. To demonstrate conclusively that there is something which exists beyond our sight and hearing, beyond the dissolution of this body, is to prove, not immortality, but an extension of mortality. That which is hidden to the senses is not necessarily off the sense plane. There are ultra-violet rays which we do not see. Does that prove the spectrum immortal? Why then should man be immortal when he drops his gross body and becomes invisible to us? What assurance have we that another death may not some day destroy that subtler form and make a final end of all things? If matter is perishable here, if its states are changeable, then matter there must be perishable and its states changeable. All the messages which come to us from the other side indicate conditions similar to those we know here; therefore we are forced to admit that on this side or the other side of the veil we call death the state is a mortal one.

Yet to know that mortality persists beyond the body is an important step towards further knowledge. It is also the only one that science can hope to take so long as it

confines itself to the investigation of phenomena. In the far Vedic past, however, there were great scientists who did not limit their researches to the sweep of a telescope across the heavens or to the revelations of a test tube in the laboratory. The truths they sought lay beyond the domain of the microscope, beyond the phenomenal realm; even the finer vision of the psychic senses did not suffice them. Deeper and deeper they delved until they pierced the last crust of matter and looked upon the soul of things. Beholding that Changeless Effulgent Essence, they realized that immortality was not a question of human life or human death. It was not dependent on time, place or condition. It was the inherent nature of man, the underlying rock of his being, while mortality was only a temporary state created by his subjection to material desires. Just as a man may be enslaved by his dress, believing it to make or unmake him although actually it is not in any way a real part of his life, so is mortality a garment to which man himself lends whatever reality it may seem to possess. Immortality, however, is not another garment, as sometimes supposed. The mortal cannot "put on immortality" any more than he puts on his body when he takes off his clothing. The moment he has divested himself of his mortal dress his immortality stands revealed.

Actually the whole universe in the final analysis is deathless. All that we see is not death but change—the breaking up of a form, the falling apart of a compound. The science of Physics long ago discovered that the sum-total of matter and force in the universe remains eternally the same. Should one atom die or drop out of existence, the equilibrium would be destroyed and the entire universe would crumble. Life and death in creation mean the melting of one form into another, the gross into a subtle, the

subtle into a grosser or more visible form; but "the existent can never become non-existent" as the Gita declares, for where would it go since all that is must be existent? So is it with the human being. The soul of man cannot die because it is an integral part of the Ultimate. At some point man must touch pure being, otherwise he would not exist at all; and that point of union constitutes his soul or real Self, while this rush and whirl of matter about him is what we call life and death. He is like an eddy in a river: the water flows on and on, but the force which creates the eddy remains fixed and unchanged. So long as he walks among us wrapped in a visible form we say that he is living, when he casts off the gross body we say that he is dead. In reality, however, the subtler the material form he wears, the more living he becomes, until he frees himself from the last thin covering of matter and enters into Life Itself.

Individual evolution falls apparently into two distinct stages: the first is an evolution out of unconscious immortality into self-conscious mortality, the second is out of conscious mortality into conscious immortality. The soul or life-germ through the first period seems wholly absorbed in developing a perfect instrument for mortal expression; having achieved that, it turns round and bends all its energies towards extricating itself from its own creation. It is like a dancer who starts with a long floating scarf and by skillful pirouetting gradually winds herself in it until she can scarcely move hand or foot; then reversing her revolutions she little by little frees herself from the entrammeling folds until they drop from her hand. But why should we thus entangle ourselves? This question is only asked where it cannot be answered and it can only be answered where it is never asked, because it is a matter not of words but of unfoldment. The answer which Vedanta gives us is: Man

never has entangled himself, he merely thinks he has. In reality he is immortal at this moment, but he imagines himself a mortal because he is identifying himself with that which is not a real part of him. He believes himself to be the perishable body which houses him, whereas he is actually the imperishable dweller within.

Picture a bubble on a wave in the ocean. If it holds obstinately to the thought "I am a bubble," "I am a bubble," then inevitably it will measure its life by the duration of the bubble. Let it, on the contrary, expand to the point of thinking itself one with the wave on which it rides and its life will stretch to the length of the wave's life. But let it suddenly realize "I am one with the ocean," and a thousand times it may rise and fall but never does it become less living; there is no ebb or flow in its consciousness of existence. The same is true of man. So long as he clings to the belief "I am the body," like the bubble his life must seem fleeting. When he grows to identify himself with his thought or soul life, the measure of his existence must lengthen; but when he awakens to the supreme fact that he is one with the Infinite Ocean of Being, then he knows that his life is eternal. Yet always was he one with the Eternal; the change has been in his consciousness, not in the condition of his existence.

But what becomes of this mortal self when we realize our immortality? Where does it go? The story is told of a king's son who was stolen from the court and brought up among shepherds. He tended the flocks with his comrades and regarded himself as one of them. Then one day the king died and the ministers by diligent searching found the lad and placed him on the throne. What became of the shepherd boy when he learned that he was a king? Or where did the sheep go when a certain lion, who was born

among sheep and had acquired all the habits of a sheep, discovered by his reflection in a clear lake that he was a lion? He simply never was the sheep, he always was a lion, only he did not know it.

It is this delusive character of our present state of consciousness that has led the Vedic sages to liken human existence to a dream. Man on this plane, they say, is neither wholly awake nor sound asleep. He wanders in a twilight world between, a dream world in which reality and unreality mingle. He seems perpetually at the meeting point between the pairs of opposites—pleasure and pain, knowledge and ignorance, life and death, mortality and immortality; and the swift-flowing current of human activity buffets him back and forth between the two, unfolding within him by the very prod of circumstance the higher faculties of discrimination and choice, and an ever-growing hunger for the Real. Those indeed whose vision has broken over the boundary lines between visible and invisible and who see far behind and far ahead in the soul's Godward course, declare that this human state is the best for Divine realization. In the brute state the consciousness is too deeply buried in matter; in the heaven state it is too engrossed in enjoyment; only in this intermediate human state has the living being the most favorable conditions for spiritual attainment,—enough of joy to give him courage to go on, enough of sorrow to remind him that the heaven he seeks is not here; enough of light to allow him to push forward on his journey, enough of darkness to grant him periods of rest.

Did we utilize to the utmost our present opportunity, this one incarnation would suffice to gain liberation. But we are not eager enough. We are not yet weary enough of our mortality. We are tired of the pain, but not of the pleasure; we shrink from the dishonor, but we covet the

honor; we flee from death, but we cling to the transitory life with which it alternates; so we go on through birth after birth learning slowly and arduously the lesson of immortality. As long as there lingers in our hearts the least desire for gratification in the world of matter, we are allowed to return to satisfy it. This is all that reincarnation means,—the freedom to be a mortal through as many lives as we choose and an equal freedom to attain immortality here and now. Nor does this apply merely to this plane. The law extends on through all those planes we call heavens, which are only subtler forms of physical life; for the Lord tells us in the Bhagavad-Gita: "All states of existence from the world of the creator (the highest heaven) to this world are subject to return, but those who attain to Me, the Supreme, they have no need to be reborn." They have discovered their indestructible nature and the true Source of their happiness, hence their journey is ended.

So long as we live mortal lives, we shall continue to be mortal and we shall have to come again and again. Every new ambition or attachment for mortal things ties us more tightly to the earth plane. Every fear of punishment, every desire for reward creates for us a new heaven or a new hell. Every effort spent in mortal advancement at the cost of our soul's welfare makes us a little more human and prolongs our human state. But how can we change our course without putting ourselves at odds with our environment and relations? This is invariably the question asked. Yet past experience does not justify it. When we ceased to be a brute and became a human being did we prove less useful to society? Why then should we fear a cataclysm when we pass from the human to the Divine? Is the child of man wiser, sweeter, mightier than the child of God? Can the limited do more than the unlimited? Can the finite outstrip

the infinite, the mortal the immortal? On the contrary, do we not classify as "Immortals" those who do most in the world? Why? Because consciously or unconsciously an element of immortality enters into all they do; they work from the depths of their being instead of from the surface; they draw from their eternal undying nature, hence what they achieve has an enduring fundamental quality which makes it live. Also whatever we do that shines has a glint of the immortal upon it. At some point our mortal nature has given way and out of our real Self a Divine ray has shot forth and glorified our work. Let even the humblest task be done with the radiance of that Light upon it and it stands a model for mankind. Or let the smallest service be rendered with that God-warmth in it and some soul has been given a fresh start on the way.

We cannot hope, however, to transform our consciousness in a day. We must acquire the habits of immortality. We must readjust our scale of values, change our standard of measurement in life. We must extend our vision by keeping our gaze fixed on the bigger things; by reminding ourselves that to our soul a thousand years are as a day and that beyond that thousand lie other countless thousands on and on in an endless Eternity of life. How quickly will the passing joys and sorrows of this small earth-existence dwindle and fade away! And if still the mortal hems us in and will not let us go, then let us gather up this little life of ours and in one complete act of self-surrender plunge with it into the great Ocean of Immortal Being, crying out: "O Thou Supreme Lord, I lay myself at Thy Feet. Behold I come clothed in such close-bound garments of mortality that I cannot free myself. Thou alone canst cut them loose. Take my body, put it in what place or state Thou wilt, but make it an instrument in Thy hand. Take this mind all

sick with mortality, heal it, purify it, and pour through it a flood of Thy Divine Wisdom. Take this heart, tear or soothe it, gratify or bereave it, do with it what Thou wilt, but only cleanse it and make it a clear channel for Thy Love Divine. Empty my whole consciousness of mortality and fill it full of radiant immortality. Grant, O Thou Tender and most Merciful Lord, that henceforth each hour of living may be a death unto myself and a resurrection unto Life Eternal hid in Thee."

ADORATION.

By Zina Barton Partridge.

Eternal Witness, I can sense
  Thine essence through each breeze;
Borne from Thy presence comes it hence,
  The soul of me it frees.

Eternal Witness, I can hear
  Thy sweet song all about,
Until away from me has fear
  Forever flown with doubt.

Eternal Witness, I can see
  Thee everywhere I gaze,
Transcendant joy! forever free
  From life's bewildering maze.

Eternal Witness, now I feel
  Thee, deep within my heart;
Whate'er I touch I long to kneel;
  There nothing is from Thee apart.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

Extract of Address by Swami Paramananda

(Delivered at the Celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday.)

We have gathered here this evening to do honor to one of India's greatest Spiritual lights; but his eminence is not due to any great learning or intellectual attainment. Sri Ramakrishna was the child of very humble parents. He was born in a remote village of Bengal and his early education, far from our idea of education, did not extend even through the Grammar School. We often think that a man cannot have breadth or largeness of vision unless he is acquainted with other minds, unless he has read much; but we find quite the opposite with Sri Ramakrishna. He did not care for learning, he gave little time to study; his passion was to know God. How to realize Him, how to help others realize Him, this was the one all-absorbing thought of his mind. In this age such a passion seems almost an insanity. Even in India it made him a conspicuous figure. His parents, however, naturally believed that he should receive proper education and sent him to the village primary school. For a time he tried to apply himself to his studies and had some lessons in reading, writing and arithmetic. But this did not last very long, for the boy Gadadhar (the childhood name of Sri Ramakrishna) began to reflect in his mind: "Will this give me the knowledge of the Ultimate?" "Shall I reach God through study?"

One day he chanced to see a Brahmin boy returning from a religious ceremony in some house, carrying as his earnings some rice, vegetables and a little money. "Is this the aim of education," he asked, "to earn a little food and money like that?" Thus he concluded that the ordinary education was only for material advancement and did not lead to the realization of Truth. "If there is anything worth

while to learn, I will learn that; but I must learn it directly from the Spirit of the Universe," he declared. This was certainly an unusual idea for a boy; but as a small child he had already had a remarkable experience. To others it had seemed like a fainting fit, but in reality, so he explained to his disciples afterwards, he had gone into the superconscious state and had realized that all was God. Later Sri Ramakrishna came to Calcutta to live with one of his brothers who was a learned scholar as well as a priest in a temple near Calcutta. This temple was consecrated to the Divine Mother and after a time Sri Ramakrishna was called to carry on the daily service before the Mother's image. But as he worshipped day after day the thought rose in his heart, "Is it true that Mother is real? Does the Mother accept the offerings? Or is it all a matter of imagination?" He felt great yearning in his heart to know the living Mother and poured out his soul in supplication: "Come, O Mother. Another day is gone and I have not realized Thee."

It is said that sometimes in the agony of his heart he would rub his face against the ground and shed bitter tears saying: "O Mother, I can no longer live. My life will not remain in this body unless Thou manifest Thyself to me." This soul-stirring and whole-hearted devotion to God was the secret of Sri Ramakrishna's unique spiritual realization and his message of infinite tolerance. Sri Ramakrishna began with ordinary symbol worship, but very soon his vision transcended the symbol; for he saw his Deity everywhere in everything and realized that the worshipper and God the worshipped were one. Although he first realized God through his chosen Ideal,—as Divine Mother, he did not stop there. He tried many other forms of worship,—the Christian and Mohammedan as well as that of various Hindu

sects, and he found that all alike led to God. In a wonderfully short time he realized Godhood by each path. His concentration was so perfect and his fervor so intense that he went straight to the goal, and always he found it to be the same. Thus tolerance became the keynote of his teaching. We often talk of tolerance and try to show sympathy for others, but in our heart of hearts we feel that our faith is the best. Not so with Sri Ramakrishna. His attitude of toleration was not that of morbid forbearance. Through direct contact with God he had learned that all forms of faith come from the same source, and that gave him unbounded charity and sympathy towards all. His whole life was devoted to one thought,—to bring the consciousness of God to every soul.

His teaching is given in such simple parables that a child can understand and this shows how clear and direct his vision was. His message is full of hopefulness. Those who are broken and discouraged cannot fail to find new hope in him. He would say to the down-hearted who came to him: "Why fear? Why give up? You are a child of Divine Mother." He himself talked to his Divine Mother as a little child and he never spoke a word that was not given him by Her. Thus we find his life wholly imbued with the Spirit of God and he tried to make others fill their lives with Him; for to him the God-life was so clear and simple that not to realize God seemed unnatural. He illustrates with vividness the teaching given by Jesus the Christ: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven," for from his earliest childhood his supreme soul-passion was to see God and to help others see Him. His gift to the world was not something which he had earned with his hands and feet; he gave something of infinitely greater value,—the knowledge of Godhood; and the sincerity of his life was so impressive that no one, even

the most critical and unbelieving, could come into his presence without feeling his power.

Sri Ramakrishna's mission was not to preach in the ordinary sense of the word. He never preached, yet he never stopped giving spiritual blessings to others. His mission was to live with God; to bring His light to all. He struggled for that, he gave up all for that. His idea was not to disturb or transplant the flower of religion as it was growing in each heart, but to foster it and hasten its growth. His desire was to help all men to know God by their own natural path, to know God as One and as the Mother of all living beings, and not merely to say it but to feel it. His love for mankind is so extensive, so all-inclusive that it makes us feel like members of one family and to me that is the greatest message,—to make men realize that there is no difference, no barrier, but that all living beings are children of the same Divine Father and therefore brothers.

REPORTS

The public celebration of the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna took place at the Vedanta Centre of Boston on the evening of March 7th. A number of students and friends came to do honor to the great Teacher. The chief feature of the commemorative exercises was the Address by Swami Paramananda, given in part above. Music and meditation preceded and followed it. At the close the guests gathered in the Library, where refreshments were served and a pleasant hour of informal social intercourse was spent.

* * * *

At the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on March 12th. The services continued through the whole day and

besides readings from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and other Holy Scriptures, Swami Prakashananda delivered three special lectures on: "Sri Ramakrishna—His unique life and Mission," "Sri Ramakrishna—The Universality of His Message," and "Sri Ramakrishna as a Great World Teacher." Those who attended the services felt the impressiveness of the occasion and declared that the whole day had been a veritable feast.

* * * *

On the invitation of the College Women's Club, Swami Paramananda recently lectured in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. His subject was "India and Her Achievements," and so much interest in Eastern thought and teaching was aroused by his words that he was urgently requested to return for a longer period to hold classes as well as to deliver other lectures.

* * * *

Through the generous contributions of friends to the Indian Famine Relief Fund started by the Centre, the Swami has been able to send a second remittance to the Relief Work of the Ramakrishna Mission. This was further augmented by a special contribution from the Indo-American Association, which after deciding to disband in order to give their entire support to the Hindusthan Association, voted to turn all funds in the treasury over to the Mission for the Famine Sufferers.

* * * *

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the death of Mr. Nelson Smith, who passed away at his home in New York on February 28th. When Swami Vivekananda began his teaching in New York, he became one of his earliest and most faithful followers. He has ever since remained a devoted supporter of Vedanta and the work has lost a loyal friend in him.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

The Message of the East

OF THE
UNIVERSITY

MAY 1916

Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE

1 Queensberry St., Boston, Mass. U. S. A.

SINGLE COPIES, 10 Cents $1.00 A YEAR

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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CONCENTRATION AND ILLUMINATION.

By Swami Paramananda.

We all possess a certain amount of concentration, but with the majority it is instinctive and automatic, not conscious. Even among the animals we see how a lion or tiger will collect his forces by a moment of absolute stillness before he springs upon his prey; that automatic, instinctive power of concentration is embedded in every living creature. But until we can gain conscious command of our mental and spiritual faculties, we can never have unerring vision. When the scattered mind is gathered together it is like a bright inner light, and by it man is able to investigate the latent powers which he possesses but of which he is not now wholly aware. As he grows more and more conscious of these hidden forces and learns to use them, he becomes more and more powerful. We never wish to be defeated and yet how often our strength of mind or our physical capacities prove inadequate. It is because we have not the full and conscious possession of our entire organism. Man cannot achieve much unless he has free use of his hands and feet, free use of his eyes and ears, free use of his muscles and above all free use of his mind and intelligence. But how many of us have the free use of all these? There is no doubt that we possess them, they are our birthright, but

when we would make use of them, we find them rebellious to our will and we feel helpless. The cause of this however does not lie in any inherent lack of power, but in our failure to control and concentrate what we have.

Concentration means wholeness, unity, equilibrium. The hands, feet, mind, all our members and faculties must be unified. They must all work in harmony, in tranquillity, in balance. Balance is needed everywhere in life. A man may be over-active or he may be idle: both indicate absence of self-control. Sri Krishna declares in the Gita: "O Arjuna, the practice of Yoga is not for him who eats too much or who does not eat at all, nor for him who sleeps too much or keeps awake in excess. He who is moderate in eating and recreation, moderate in his efforts in work, moderate in sleep and wakefulness, his practice of Yoga destroys all misery." What does this signify? That he who goes to extremes is a slave of impulse, he is not the master. He lacks balance and lack of balance means lack of strength and without strength no great work can be accomplished. If on the contrary we practise moderation or equilibrium even in our most ordinary daily tasks, we shall see how steady will be our gain in concentration.

The practice of moderation necessitates a certain amount of self-discipline. The Hindus call this *Tapas*, which literally means "fire" or "heat"; and they believe that unless this fire of self-discipline is lighted in order to burn to ashes all the impurities and limitations of our system, spiritual illumination will be impossible. But here too extremes must be avoided. Often people through misunderstanding or over-enthusiasm torture and strain themselves in the hope of advancing more rapidly, but they defeat their own end. Excessive penance or mortification is as harmful as self-indulgence. The purpose of all discipline is to make our

constitution more enduring, more adaptable, more responsive. Body and mind must be made wholly obedient to the will and independent of external circumstances. The person who is a slave to physical comforts should gradually eliminate all that is superfluous and train himself to be content with the bare necessities. Anyone who finds it difficult to overcome physical lethargy and rise early in the morning should drag himself out of bed by sheer force of will. One who is inclined to over-eating should by degrees reduce the quantity of his food. A person who has the habit of talking unnecessarily should practice silence; and the body should be trained to perfect stillness by persistent control of all useless motions. Such practices not only increase our power of concentration and meditation, but do much to improve our bodily health and make us happier in every way.

The mind falls naturally into three general states:—the dull state; the over-active or scattered state; and the calm, centred state. These correspond to the three *gunas* or qualities of matter, called in Sanskrit *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattwa*. They are innate in every living being and manifest in the human mind as the subconscious, the conscious and the superconscious. The first quality is that of darkness, inertia, heaviness, the brute state. When the mind is overcome by this quality, it lacks in power to differentiate between right and wrong and is easily carried away by lower animal passions. When the second quality is in ascendancy, the mental tendency is towards excessive ambition, egotism, arrogance and discontent. In this state a man is consumed by feverish unrest and an irresistible desire to multiply possessions and to entangle himself more and more in external undertakings. His energies are scattered and often wasted; and no matter how much he achieves he is never satisfied, for the flame of his desire mounts with each new gratification

as a fire fed by fresh fuel. With the quality of *Sattwa* the mind grows collected, serene and illumined. This is the fitting state of mind for spiritual attainment. In order to reach it the condition of dullness or inertia must be conquered by stimulating all the physical and mental activities. Then these activities must be regulated and restrained until they are focused. The subconscious must be brought into complete subjection to the conscious and the conscious must be expanded into the superconscious. This is the natural process in acquiring the power of concentration and meditation.

Meditation is inseparable from concentration. When the mind has gained its full strength through singleness it naturally becomes meditative. Often the mind is compared to a lake. If the surface is absolutely smooth—not a ripple—then we can see clearly what lies beneath. Similarly when this mind becomes calm, when the wind of uncontrolled desire does not constantly create ripples over the surface of it, then the image of our true nature is not broken and we get a perfect reflection of what we are and what our relation with God is. As long however as the mind is agitated, so long our vision can never be perfect. We are constantly hoping that some one else may give us knowledge and happiness, but that is not possible. They can only come from within. Each human being has latent within him the qualities which will produce true happiness, true health, true power through illumination, but he must unfold these qualities for himself. Outside influences can only stimulate a desire to gain them or awaken him to the fact that he possesses them.

What we need is to be active spiritually. As we go on living our outer life we must devote some time each day to making our mind introspective that we may develop our

subtler powers of perception. In all investigations certain instruments are necessary, as we see scientists inventing finer and finer instruments for their researches. Also for spiritual observation we need a form of mind which can discern the subtler things imperceptible to our ordinary sense faculties. The concentrated mind is such an instrument and the only one fitted for higher research. It is like a focused light. We know that when light is dissipated we can not see well, but when the scattered rays are brought together by the help of a shade or reflector, then everything grows distinct. So will the hidden things of the universe be revealed to us when through determined and steadfast practice we gather up the present forces of our mind, which is now weak only because it is disorganized and divided.

We must not remain content however with the lower forms of concentration. These may bring us physical health, prosperity or success, because concentration always gives efficiency; but even though we acquire more wealth, greater honor or increased bodily strength, we shall find that one part of our being still remains incomplete and unsatisfied in spite of all our worldly acquisitions. Never will it be content until we awaken and begin to work for our higher self-development. Nor should such work be regarded as selfish, because all human beings are knitted together and as we unfold our own spiritual nature we cannot fail to benefit others. The same life runs through and through everywhere; and only he who can seize hold of that subtle spiritual being hidden in every heart, will know how to solve the riddle of this human existence for himself and be able to render lasting help to his fellowmen. That one alone lives happily and fearlessly. Now we are fearful because so many things are hidden from us: we fear the future because we do not know what the future may bring, we fear

death because we are not sure what may come after. For this reason we must learn to focus the mind and turn it within, then by its brilliant light we shall understand all things and attain the vision of Truth.

The purpose of meditation is to gain that vision. Nor must we stop until we have seen by direct perception our True Self and our relation with the Supreme. That must be the purpose of all our spiritual practice. When the mind becomes fixed on the Supreme Being, when through meditation we are united with that Power, then we have fulness of vision. This is called the superconscious state or *Samadhi.* As we meditate on That which is All-Light, the darkness of mind and body will vanish; for what we constantly think upon, that we become. There is only one Power, one Intelligence, one Mind, which is God, and our mind is nothing but a reflection of that Universal Mind. As it works separate from that Mind, it remains unintelligent, ignorant, powerless; but when it becomes united with It, it attains a state of complete illumination. "After having attained which no other gain seems greater; being established wherein man is not overwhelmed even by great sorrow."

The infallible index of true progress is found in the tone the man takes. Neither his age, nor his breeding, nor company, nor books, nor all together, can hinder him from being deferential to a higher spirit than his own. If he have not found his home in God, his manners, his forms of speech, the turn of his sentences, the build, shall I say, of all his opinions, will involuntarily confess it, let him brave it out how he will. If he have found his centre, the Deity will shine through him, through all the disguises of ignorance, of uncongenial temperament, of unfavorable circumstance.

—*Emerson.*

AMITABHA, THE INFINITE LIGHT.

From the Teachings of Buddha.

One of the disciples approached Lord Buddha with troubled heart and doubting mind, saying: "Blessed Master, why should we renounce the pleasures of the world, if you forbid us to work miracles or to seek power over the supernatural? Is not Amitabha, the infinite light of revelation, the source of countless miracles?"

The Blessed One replied: "How long will it take thee to comprehend the Truth? The mendicant who renounces the fleeting pleasures of the world for the eternal bliss of holiness performs the only miracle that can truly be called a miracle. The desire to perform miracles springs either from covetousness or from vanity. Amitabha, the unbounded light, is the source of wisdom, of virtue, of Buddhahood."

"But, Master, is the promise of a happy region called the Pure Land a mere myth or vain talk?"

The Blessed One replied: "There is such a blissful paradise, but the country is spiritual and it is accessible only to those who are spiritual. He alone can reach that happy land whose soul is filled with the infinite light of Truth. Only that one who has attained enlightenment can live and breathe in the holy atmosphere of that paradise."

The disciple said: "Teach me, O Master, the meditations to which I must devote myself that my mind may enter into the paradise of the Pure Land."

Lord Buddha answered: "There are five meditations. The first meditation is the meditation of love, in which you must so adjust your heart that you long for the welfare of all living beings, including the happiness of your enemies. The second meditation is the meditation of pity, in which you think of all who may be in distress, vividly picturing

to your mind their sorrows and anxieties so as to arouse a deep compassion for them in your heart. The third meditation is the meditation of joy, in which you dwell in thought on the prosperity of others and rejoice in their rejoicings. The fourth meditation is the meditation on impurity, in which you consider the evil consequences of sinful action and corruption. The fifth meditation is the meditation on serenity, in which you rise above love and hate, tyranny and oppression, wealth and want, and look upon your own destiny with impartial calmness and perfect tranquillity. A true follower of the Tathagata (Blessed One) does not found his trust upon austerities or rituals, but giving up the idea of self relies with his whole heart upon Amitabha, which is the immeasurable light of Truth."

Then the disciple said: "Show me, O Lord, the path to the highest wisdom. Reveal to me the meditations which are the means of acquiring *Samadhi*, that fixity of mind which enraptures the soul."

The Blessed One questioned: "Which are the practices through which one attains illumination?"

The disciple replied: "There are four practices. The first is seclusion in which one must free the mind of sensuality; the second is tranquillity of mind and joyousness; the third is taking delight in spiritual things; the fourth is a state of perfect purity and peace in which the mind rises above all grief and gladness."

The Blessed One said: "Good, my son. Be sober and abandon wrong practices which only serve to stultify the mind."

The disciple begged again: "Teach me, O Lord, the path of the highest wisdom."

The Blessed One replied: "There are four means by which wisdom is acquired. Prevent bad qualities from aris-

ing. Put away bad qualities which have arisen. Produce goodness that does not yet exist. Search with sincerity and persevere in your search. In the end you will find the Truth."

ON MEDITATION.

Familiar Talk by Swami Ramakrishnananda.

Meditation means complete self-abandonment. To meditate successfully one must get rid of this ego. You know, before a great glory all little glories disappear, so before the effulgent glory of God this little ego will completely vanish, as the stars vanish when the sun rises. The moment you have given up everything and understood your own helplessness, at that moment God-vision will come. If you can reach this state and hold it even for a few moments, you will see how quickly God will begin to rise up in your mind; and when you will be able to remain in that state, God will always be present there.

But, you say, I cannot see Him with these eyes of mine, I cannot hear Him with these ears, I cannot touch Him with these hands, how then am I to perceive Him? You can never perceive Him in this way. These senses are made for the creation, not for the Creator. To go to the Creator, you must throw aside these instruments which take you directly to the creation. You must no longer seek the help of the senses or the mind. You must divest yourself completely of the offices of both. So long as you demand the aid of these, your ego is in full force and meditation will not come. When, however, you have been able to put down the ego and go beyond the mind and senses, meditation will come of itself. This is the easiest way to get it,—by the practice of "Not I, not I, but Thou."

God dwells in the heart of every man. He is the nearest

thing to each one of us, but the mind has been dragged out so long by the things of this world that it is difficult for it to come home. Therefore with the sword of wisdom one must cut asunder all these worldly attachments. People often say to me: "I find it so difficult to concentrate my mind. It goes to my business, to my household affairs and it seems impossible to hold it on God. Why is this?" The answer is: "Because your mind does not belong to you. You have sold it to your business, to your worldly affairs, how can you expect to command what is not yours?" With a divided mind you can never hope to gain the power of concentration and meditation and without these the vision of Truth is unattainable. Christ said that only the pure in heart shall see God. Pure means unmixed, homogeneous, one. The mind is pure therefore when it is perfectly single, devoted to one object. The mind as we know it is merely a collection of desires, it is made up of desires. Get rid of selfish desires and nothing remains but the *Paramatman* or the Divine Self. There is no difference between the purified mind and the Self of man. So if you wish to see God, the only way is to get rid of all selfish desires, to make your mind single, for as Christ has said: "When the eye is single, the body is full of light."

There are of course many different practices which will help you to gain control over your mind and senses, but all these practices, even the best, are in some measure mechanical. Endue your heart with devotion and your mind will naturally turn towards God, for what you love you like to think about. As a matter of fact every man is loving God, for every man loves eternal life, all-knowledge, all-blissfulness and these are God. But few men know that they are loving Him, just as a man who has been hearing all his life of a mango but has never seen one, may actually be eating

a mango yet he will not know it until someone comes and tells him; so all men are loving God but unless some one comes and tells them, they do not know it. When, however, you realize that God is that which you are seeking everywhere in the universe, then it will not be difficult for you to love Him; all your thoughts will spontaneously flow towards Him and meditation will become easy.

SELECTION FROM THE MAHABHARATA.

Anugita-Parva.

The son of Pritha (Arjuna), having recovered his own kingdom, joyously spent his time in the company of Sri Krishna, his heart filled with delight. One day he addressed his companion saying: "O Mighty-armed One, Thy greatness became known to me upon the approach of the battle (of Kurukshetra). O son of Devaki, Thy form also as the Lord of the Universe then became known to me. What Thou, O Holy One, said unto me at that time out of love has all been forgotten by me in consequence of the fickleness of my mind. Often, however, have I been desirous to know something regarding the truths then spoken."

Vasudeva (Sri Krishna) said: "I imparted to thee truths that are eternal. Verily I discoursed to thee on Religion in its true form and on all the eternal laws. It is exceedingly displeasing to me to learn that through carelessness thou didst not retain what I then imparted. The recollection of all that I told thee on that occasion will not come to me now. O son of Pandu, thou art without doubt destitute of faith and of right understanding. It is impossible for me to repeat in detail all that I said to thee then. I discoursed to thee on the Supreme Brahman, having concentrated myself in Yoga. I shall recite to thee, however,

an ancient narrative dealing with the same subjects. Listen now to everything I say, so that with an understanding adapted to my teaching thou mayest succeed in attaining the highest end. O Arjuna, once a Brahmana came to us from the regions of Heaven. . . The Brahmana said:—

'That man who is the friend of all, who endures all, who is attached to tranquillity, who has conquered all his senses, who is freed from fear and anger and who is self-subjugated, succeeds in emancipating himself.

'He who behaves towards all creatures as towards himself, who is restrained, pure, free from vanity and divested of egoism, is regarded as emancipated from everything.

'He also is emancipated who looks with equal eye upon life and death, pleasure and pain, gain and loss, the agreeable and disagreeable.

'He is in every way emancipated who does not covet what belongs to others, who never disregards any living being, who rises above all pairs of opposites and whose soul is free from attachment.

'He becomes emancipated who acquires neither merit nor demerit, who casts off the merits and demerits accumulated in previous births, who spends the energies of his body to attain a tranquillized soul, and who rises above all duality.

'He who sees his soul void of smell, of taste, of touch, of sound, devoid of belongings, of sight, unknowable (through the senses) . . . devoid of attributes though enjoying them, that one becomes emancipated.

'Having been freed from all impressions (of good and evil), one then attains Brahman (the Absolute) who is eternal and supreme, tranquil, stable, enduring and indestructible.

'After this I shall declare the science of Yoga, than which there is nothing superior, and how Yogins by con-

centration behold the perfect Soul. Do thou learn from me those doors by which, directing the Soul within the body, one beholds that which is without beginning and end.

'Withdrawing the senses from their objects, one should fix the mind upon the Soul; having previously undergone the strictest self-discipline, one should practise that concentration of mind which leads to emancipation.

'If the good man succeeds in concentrating the mind on the Soul, habituated to deep meditation, he then beholds the Supreme Soul in his own soul.

'Self-subjugated, always concentrated and with all his senses completely conquered, the man of cleansed soul, as the result of complete concentration of mind, succeeds in beholding the Soul by the soul.

'As a person, beholding some unknown individual in a dream, recognizes him when he sees him on waking, saying "This is he"; in the same manner the good man, having seen the Supreme Soul in the deep contemplation of *Samadhi* (superconsciousness), recognizes it upon waking from *Samadhi*.

'When the bearer of a body adequately beholds the Soul in Yoga, he then has no one who is master over him, for he then becomes the lord of the three worlds. He succeeds in assuming divers bodies according as he wishes. Turning aside decrepitude and death, he neither grieves nor exults. The self-restrained man, concentrated in Yoga, can create even the godship of the gods. Casting off his transient body, he attains the Immutable Brahman.

'Devoid of desire and possessed of a tranquil mind, the person established in Yoga is never shaken by pain, sorrow or fear. Weapons never pierce him, death does not exist for him. Nowhere in the world can be seen anyone who is happier than he.

'Hear now how a man, habituating himself to deep meditation, succeeds in attaining Yoga (union with God). Thinking of that point of the compass which has the sun behind it, the mind should be fixed, not outside, but in the interior of that mansion (the body) in which one may happen to live. Residing within that mansion, the mind should then, with all its outward and inward operations, fix the gaze in that particular room (the heart) in which one abides. At that time when, having deeply meditated, one beholds that All, there is then nothing outside God (Brahman) where the mind may dwell.

'As a man placing some precious object in his store room should keep his mind on it, so, placing the mind within one's own body and restraining all the senses, one should seek after the Soul, avoiding all heedlessness. . . . It is only with the lamp of the mind that the great Soul can be seen.'

"Has this discourse been heard by thee, O son of Pritha, with mind directed solely towards it? It is my opinion, O Arjuna, that this is difficult of being comprehended by one whose understanding is confused, or who has acquired no wisdom by study, or who eats food unsuited to the body, or whose soul is not purified. . . . But that mortal, O son of Pandu, who endued with intelligence and faith and valor, renounces as unreal what is regarded by the world as real, succeeds within a short time in obtaining the Supreme by these means. This is all that is to be said—there is nothing else that is higher than this."

Put on armor that will harm no one, let thy coat of mail be that of understanding, and convert thine enemies to friends. Fight with valor, but with no weapon except the word of God. —*Guru Nanak.*

AIDS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

Adapted from The Brahmavadin.

There are certain means recognized in the religion of Vedanta whereby men may fit themselves for the acquisition of spiritual knowledge, although their value is more or less of a negative character and lies chiefly in removing the intellectual and moral impediments which obstruct the upward march of the soul. The first of these is the strict regulation of the food which nourishes the physical system. The materials that build up our body exercise a profound influence on our mental constitution and require to be carefully regulated as regards their nature and quality. It is taught in the Bhagavad-Gita that Yoga or higher attainment is not possible to the man who eats too much or who eats too little; while one of the aphorisms of Bodhayana reads: "Impure food is inimical to the acquisition of wisdom."

At the present time every one recognizes that body and mind act and react on each other, and that what we eat has the power of affecting wholesomely or otherwise not only our body but the mind also. When the gross body is so fed and purified as to be made a willing servant of the discriminative faculty, a great step is taken towards the purification and control of the mind itself and this facilitates concentration. It is not possible to prescribe any fixed rule of diet, for always must this be determined by the individual constitution and occupation. There are certain foods which increase the density and heaviness of the system, causing depression, lethargy or mental dullness; there are others which stimulate the sense nature and create the restlessness which so often expresses itself in anger, irritability, discontent and impulsiveness. Both of these should be avoided by those who are eager to advance spiritually. They should choose such foods as bring calmness and lightness, while

giving sufficient vigor. A simple non-meat diet is naturally best adapted to this end; but if this represents too radical a change, then every effort should be made to gradually modify the diet until the system becomes accustomed to lighter foods. If the change is made with proper caution and intelligence no ill effects can possibly result.

The next question which should engage the attention of the aspirant after *Moksha* or freedom is the company he keeps. The companionship of the holy and wise is one of the main elements of spiritual progress. The *Srimat Bhagavata* declares: "Association with great Souls is the gate to Salvation;" and Sankaracharya teaches: "The company of the good gives rise to the virtue of non-attachment, non-attachment gives rise to the absence of delusion, absence of delusion gives rise to firmness of mind and firmness of mind leads to liberation even in this life." The choice of friends is therefore one of the most important questions for anyone who has entered on the higher path. He should also not consider it selfish to withdraw so far as possible from association with those who bring confusion to his mind or who weaken his loyalty to his Ideal. When a man is firmly established in his spiritual life it matters not where he goes or with whom he associates, for he will carry with him his own atmosphere as the rose its fragrance and no evil can touch him; but so long as we are little children in the spirit we must guard ourselves from all baneful or retarding influences. "A young sapling should always be protected by a fence from cows and goats and other animals," Sri Ramakrishna says, "but when it becomes a big tree, then a flock of goats or a herd of cows may take shelter under its spreading branches. Similarly when your faith is weak, you should protect it from the destructive effects of evil company and worldliness; but when you grow strong

in faith and knowledge no worldliness or evil will be able to harm you, rather will many who are wicked become godly through association with you."

A further step towards the acquisition of wisdom is faithful devotion to a teacher. The impulse that quickens knowledge and vivifies devotion cannot proceed from study and thought alone, but must emanate from the soul which has realized the truth and bears witness to it. Even in matters of secular education the value of the contact of soul with soul is recognized to be very great, while the personal influence of a worthy spiritual teacher finds ample testimony in the history of all the world's great prophets and founders of religion. Nothing indeed so quickly strengthens conviction and steadfastness as to serve humbly and lovingly one who embodies in his life the highest wisdom and truest practice of holiness.

Such service also proves a powerful factor in accomplishing the next step in spiritual discipline, the conquest of ego. Egoism is the supreme obstacle to higher advancement. It is the principle which creates in man the sense of separateness and makes him forget his unity with his fellow-beings. It is the root of all evil and misery, and unless it is overcome the human soul can never realize its true nature and escape from the trammels of material existence. It is for this reason that service and the practice of obedience play so large a part in all systems of religious discipline. Voluntary and loving subordination to the guidance of one who has purified and brought into subjection his own ego gradually leads the disciple away from self-assertion to self-surrender, and prepares him to set out on the higher practice of bringing his individual will into complete harmony with the great Universal Will, which is the end of all wisdom.

Besides the regulation of diet, association with the holy,

faithful devotion to a teacher and the conquest of ego, there are still other requirements generally demanded from the seeker after wisdom. These are the power of discriminating the real from the unreal, the eternal from the non-eternal; freedom from all calculation regarding the results of action, that is all desire for reward or fear of punishment in this world or the next; peace of mind, taming of the passions, resignation and non-attachment, patience under suffering, and even-mindedness in the alternations of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honor and dishonor; concentration of thought; faith in the efficacy of the teaching as well as the competency of the teacher; and above all an earnest and deep-rooted desire for liberation. By the help of these *Sadhanas* or spiritual practices the internal organs are both purified and strengthened and knowledge of the Soul is made possible.

Work and contemplation are also valuable aids to spiritual development. It is a fundamental principle in the training given by Vedanta that good works, including regular daily practice, are necessary for the rise of spirituality in man. They tend to purify and fortify the heart and sustain the spirit of devotion; and "He who has not turned away from his wickedness, who is not tranquil and subdued or whose mind is not at rest, he can never attain the Supreme even by knowledge", the Katha-Upanishad declares. All such good works and practices, however, will prove hindrances rather than aids if done with any ulterior motive of self-glorification or personal desire. The binding force of action lies in desire; and unless all action is performed without attachment and wholly in the service of God, we cannot hope to enjoy any true spiritual benefit. Therefore the aspirant should constantly train himself to perform all his work and duties in life as a sacrifice on the altar of God,

asking for nothing, looking for no fruits and demanding no reward. He must completely efface himself and place himself and the result of his work entirely in the hands of God. When all actions are performed in this spirit of devotion and renunciation, they lose their entrammeling force upon the soul and become the most effective aids to spiritual illumination.

PEACE.

By Swami Vivekananda.

Behold, it comes in might,
The power that is not power,
The light that is in darkness,
The shade in dazzling light.

It is joy that never spoke,
And grief unfelt, profound,
Immortal life unlived,
Eternal death unmourned.

It is not joy nor sorrow,
But that which is between;
It is not night nor morrow,
But that which joins them in.

It is sweet rest in music,
And pause in sacred art;
The silence between speaking;
Between two fits of passion,
It is the calm of heart.

It is beauty never loved,
And love that stands alone;
It is song that lives unsung,
And knowledge never known.

It is death between two lives,
And lull between two storms,
The void whence rose creation,
And that where it returns.

To it the tear-drop goes,
To spread the smiling form.
It is the Goal of Life,
And Peace—its only home!

THE PROBLEM OF SLEEP.

A new aspect of the problem of sleep is coming before the world. For the last decade an English writer, the Rev. J. P. Bullock, fellow of Trinity College, member of the Royal Scientific Society and an authority in Buddhistic Art, has been publishing a series of original studies on the subject. Their titles disclose his attitude towards it; "Sleep, Its Cause and Cure", "Why Should We Waste a Third of Life?" "Sleep, Twin-Brother of Death", "Wake and Work". His investigations began when still quite young in an effort to overcome a hampering tendency to slothfulness within himself. Learning that the great Duke of Wellington was accustomed to sleep on a plank so narrow that if he turned he fell off, because he believed that unless sleep was so deep as to cause absolute bodily stillness it was imperfect and a conclusive proof that the sleeper had had sufficient, Dr. Bullock determined to adopt the same method of conquering his laziness. He had a plank made eleven inches wide and into it fastened a few dull spikes (such as mountain climbers use on their boots) in order that when he awoke, he might not be tempted to linger on his bed. He soon accustomed himself to his new resting place and found that gradually the quality of his slumber was completely altered. It grew light and restful. He was also able to wake and sleep at

will; while the amount of sleep required steadily lessened, until he has now brought his daily allowance down to three hours.

He has also evolved various chemical and hygienic methods to aid others in their effort to outgrow the need of so much sleep. Mr. Henry Algernon Blackwood, commenting in "Vanity Fair" on Dr. Bullock's devices, writes as follows:

"There are other ways of solving the problem. The Hindus have had their eye on it for a good many centuries. They divide mental states into three types: Sattwa, calm wakefulness, contemplation; Rajas, mental activity, excitement; Tamas, dullness, sleep. The first only is considered proper to the healthy man; in their view Rajas is a kind of fever, and Tamas a kind of death. One of their reasons for diminishing diet to a minimum is that food always encourages one of the lower 'Gunas', as they call these states. However, since one must eat, they have selected certain foods as proper to Sattwa.

"This is not altogether a digression, for it was on these lines that Dr. Bullock first attacked the problem in 'The Nineteenth Century'. There is a rotation of these Gunas; they follow each other at more or less regular intervals, and if the Tamo-guna is in course and the man is not asleep it is due to some interference. It subsequently occured to Dr. Bullock that he might break up the power of the Tamo-guna altogether. To him, as to Edison, sleep appeared an altogether deplorable waste of time, and, more than this, decidedly harmful. It was a drag on Sattwa; a break in the continuity of pure consciousness; an interference with the will and the highest aspirations of man.

"He wished to meditate ceaselessly and tirelessly upon the weakness of man, to find a remedy for all evil, and behold!

he was himself a slave to the most degrading weakness. Even a few minutes of such intense thought as he, by long assiduity and courage, had developed, were sufficient to dull the keen razor edge of his mind. He was capable of ordinary work of the hardest kind in a measure which few men have ever equalled; but the super-work of meditation requires quite a superhuman power. He recognized the Tamo-guna as the enemy, and proceeded to destroy it."

Believing that sleep was the generator of Tamas, he began his attack on the enemy there, using the narrow hard bed and gradually reducing his hours of rest. Few however could adopt such drastic measures. Yet there is little doubt that the great majority of people in the Occident sleep too much. More time spent in out-door exercise and in meditation would bring a healthier state of mind and body and make so many hours of rest unnecessary. But any change in the division of hours devoted to sleep and waking should be made so gradually that no upheaval in the organism will result. Our lower nature should always be led, not antagonized.

REPORTS.

The usual season of classes and lectures at the Vedanta Centre of Washington extended this year from March 9th to April 19th and the general feeling was that it was even more successful than those of previous years. The average attendance was higher and the interest more extended. A public hall was secured for the Sunday lectures and was always well filled. Besides these there were bi-weekly classes and Sister Devamata spoke twice at the National New Thought Centre. She also gave a lecture in Baltimore, on the invitation of the Theosophical Lodge of that city, and was strongly urged to remain there for a further course of classes and lectures. As this was not possible, it was ar-

ranged that the next season should be lengthened and divided between Washington and Baltimore.

* * *

At the Vedanta Centre of Boston the meetings during April were well attended and among those who came were to be seen an unusual number of strangers. The schedule of work will remain unchanged for the present, except the Monday afternoon class which has been discontinued for the summer months.

* * *

The Famine Relief work of the Ramakrishna Mission has been suffering recently because of insufficient funds; yet unable to resist the call of distress, the workers have opened still another Centre. The latest report for the Balasore District alone showed that in one week 985 starving men, women and children were provided with food; and in order to meet further the heart-rending need, at least one more Centre must be opened.

A NEW HINDU UNIVERSITY.

Recent reports from India tell us of the laying of the cornerstone of a new Hindu University in Benares. It is believed that the founding of such a distinctly national seat of learning means a new era in Indian education. So far the Sanskrit Colleges have jealously nurtured the ancient ideals and methods, while the Government Universities have imposed an alien and more modern system. The hope in the new institution is to join the two,—to provide every advantage of Western culture and modern scientific method, while keeping as the basis and animating influence of all study the lofty precepts of the Vedic teaching. The retiring Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, in performing the ceremony referred in stirring language to this fact, saying: "This foun-

dation stone will mark a definite step in the advance towards an ideal that has stirred to its very depths the imagination of India." He called attention to the new feature in its constitution which makes it a teaching and residential university as in the West, instead of merely an affiliating and examining body as Indian Universities have always been under English rule; a feature which, he declared, reflects under new conditions the ancient Indian mode of teaching in the forest-universities of Vashishta and Gautama. He spoke of the strongly Hindu character of the new institution as "the very essence of its creation" and he added: "I am not terrified by the bogey of religious intolerance, for one's own religion ought to foster a spirit of respect for the religious convictions of others, and signs are not wanting that the day is dawning when tolerance and good will take the place of fanaticism and hatred.

"Here you hope," he continued, "in the not distant future, to see preserved all that is best in Hindu ideals of life and thought, all that is noblest of Hindu religion and tradition, culture and civilization; and grafted upon that tree, healthy and strong in its own natural soil, you hope to see growing, in it and of it, all that is good and great of Western science, industry and art, so that your young men may go forth, not only inspired with pure and noble ideals, but also equipped for the development of their mother country along the more material lines of progress and prosperity. . . . And where could a Hindu University be more happily placed than here in Benares, the ancient seat of learning, clustered about with a thousand sacred associations? Here, if anywhere, should be found that religious atmosphere which seems to me so essential to the formation of character; and here, if anywhere, the genius of modern progress will be purified by the spirit of ancient culture".

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES."—Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

The Message of the East

JUNE 1916

Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE

1 Queensberry St., Boston, Mass. U. S. A.

SINGLE COPIES, 10 Cents $1.00 A YEAR

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

VOL. V. JUNE, 1916 No. 6

WHAT IS TRUE WORSHIP?

By Sister Devamata.

Worship may be defined as the process by which man seeks to unite himself with the Divine. It is peculiar to no people, to no form of religion, to no state of development. The most elaborate rite of the Egyptian or the Brahmin, of the Buddhist or the Catholic Christian may have no larger element of worship in it than perchance fills the heart of a grave Apache Indian, who on waking stands at the door of his hut and calls on the Great Spirit to bless his family, his tribe, all the works of the day and to keep him ever mindful of the Great Mystery. Even the wildest Kaffir in Africa as he threads his way through the vast forests and beholds the might of the jungle beasts, the fury of the storm, the wonder of sun, moon and stars, senses a nameless Something to be invoked and propitiated.

Every living being feels the All and when he feels It instinctively bows before It. The only question is where and when and how. Men of a certain temperament believe that the more form is heaped on form, sound on sound, beauty on beauty, litany on litany, the greater the worship; while others of differing nature claim that the barer the walls, the emptier the altar, the simpler the music, the more extemporaneous the prayer, the surer is man's approach to

God. We have only to turn from the Gothic splendor of the Cathedral at Rheims or Chartres to the grey barrenness of a Dutch Meeting-House to see how far apart men have gone in their ideals of religious worship. To one images are a superstition, to another they are sacred symbols. For the dissenter adoration of the Virgin is idolatery, to the Catholic it means the glorification of Divine Motherhood. To this man the Bible is all-in-all, to that the Church. Nor are these differences to be deplored. Individual bias in religious practice is as natural as in bodily habit and that man is wise who, conserving his energy by moving along the path of least resistance, chooses that form which makes strongest appeal to his peculiar temperament. The wrong consists in denouncing all other forms, not seeing their equal value for men of different constitution. As well proclaim the supremacy of one radius of a circle and try to suppress all other lines leading from the circumference to the centre.

The Indo-Aryan teaching, from the earliest Vedic times, has acknowledged this need of endless variety in expression, while proclaiming absolute unity in essence. For that reason its activities have never been directed towards conversion. Believing that each man's religious consciousness is evolved from within, its effort has not been to superimpose some alien form of faith, but to infuse new life into the existing Ideal; in other words, "not to destroy, but to fulfill" (or infill) as Christ and every other Saviour has said. Even Buddhism with all its glow of enthusiasm for propaganda stayed its hands from the least act of destruction and when its missionaries were sent out to every known part of the East they received this admonition: "The basis of all religions is the same wherever they are. Try to help them all you can, teach them all you can, but do not injure them." So it was that Confucianism and Shintoism became

the base, as it were, on which the followers of the Awakened One built their loftier ideals of life. And may not that be the truer way? If we enter a house and find the hearth cold, is it kinder to say to the owner: "I have a bright fire in my chimney, come and live with me," or to give the man fuel and light and help him rekindle his family hearth? In the one case he will remain forever an alien, in the other he regains his own.

No one need be taught to worship. It is a spontaneous act of the human mind. Every being is pouring out his thought and energy in oblation at the feet of something. What that object is determines his character even more than his creed, for "whatever a man constantly thinks upon, that he becomes" and worship means the unbroken flow of mind and will towards a fixed end. If it is money or fame or power, then he is as truly an idolater as if he melted up all the coin in his strong box and recast it into a graven image. The same may be said of him who serves God for some return, who expects as the wage of his adoration immunity from misfortune and affliction on this earth or an eternity of enjoyment in heaven. "Four kinds of virtuous men worship Me," the Lord tells us in the Bhagavad-Gita, "the distressed, the seeker after knowledge, the seeker after material prosperity and the wise. Among them the wise, ever steadfast, devoted to the One, excels; for I am supremely dear to the wise man and he is dear to Me. Noble indeed are all these, but I regard the wise as My very Self; for with soul ever steadfast he is established in Me alone as his supreme goal."

To worship God for any material, personal benefit is regarded in India as "worship of the gods" or the minor aspects of Deity. He who directs all his thought towards prosperity is said to worship the god of success, another

whose whole desire moves towards intellectual attainment is a worshipper of the goddess of learning, and so through all the Vedic Pantheon. Yet not even the most ignorant Hindu worshipper bowing before the crudest image ever believes that what he invokes is other than some personified aspect of the Eternal and Supreme Lord. To the precise and clear-seeing Indo-Aryan mind all men remain polytheists so long as they are swayed and governed by worldly cravings, for each new ambition is a god they worship until it grants them their desire. Only that one becomes a worshipper of the One God who desires God alone.

Yet these lower forms of worship are not condemned as wrong. They merely represent the childhood of religion, the baby stage of stretching out the hand towards whatever amuses or attracts. Man must grow up to realize that it is more blessed to give than to receive, just as it is more blessed to have something to give than to be in want. There is nothing we cannot gain from the Supreme if we only importune long and fervently enough. He even bestows on us the faith and perseverance necessary to attain our end; but He sorrows that we ask so little of Him, for "limited and perishable is the fruit acquired by these men of small understanding," it is said in the Gita. Do we not all know some parent grieving over a wayward son, who through short-sightedness has cast aside a rich opportunity and wasted his life on petty things? In the same way the great Mother of the Universe grieves over us, as day after day we beg Her for the little baubles of this world which after a few hours' play will bring us only weariness.

God yearns with all His heart to give us the true and the eternal, but we continue to implore of Him the false and fleeting. And He gives it because in the infinitude of His love He cannot resist our cry. But through each new

disappointment He strives to teach us that no gift of the world can be equal to Himself; that not the greatest thing which we may ask of Him can be so wonderful as that which He will freely bestow on us when we come to Him in love, asking nothing. Only when we have learned to fold our hands in humble surrender instead of lifting them in eager supplication will the spirit of true worship stir within us. We must worship for the joy of worship, for the sweetness of turning our thought to the Beloved and uniting our soul with His. Can it matter how that is done? When the child runs to the mother, or the loving wife to the husband, is there need of any fixed form to express the outpourings of the heart? Rites and ceremonies have their value as amalgamating influences in collective worship or as focal points to centre the attention; they count little as means of winning Divine favor. They are for us, not for God. Their purpose is to fan the dulling fire of devotion in our hearts, to rouse our lagging thought; but as the faith grows deeper, the knowledge of spirit broader, the love stronger, simpler and simpler will become the method taken to reach the Lord.

Nowhere do we read of the great Teachers training their disciples in intricate rituals. One child-like prayer was all that Jesus left; while Sri Krishna tells us: He who offers to the Lord a leaf or flower, a fruit or water with devotion and a single heart, that is to God a welcome oblation. "Fill thy mind with God alone, work for Him, be to Him devoted, worship Him and adore Him, steadfastly uniting thy heart with Him alone and regarding Him as the Supreme Goal, thus shalt thou come unto Him"—such is the rule of life He gives. And if we will but listen in the stillness of the hour of prayer to the Divine voice in our own heart, we shall hear it whisper: "It matters not what Sacred Book

you read or by what name you call Me; it matters not whether you bow down in a cathedral close or under the arching branches of a lonely forest; it matters not whether you are clothed in gorgeous vestments or in a beggar's rags; all I want is that your heart be pure, that nothing fill it save hunger and thirst for Me; more than that I ask not. Call but once My Name with your whole soul and I will come."

Sri Ramakrishna tells the story of a saint who one day was absent from his hermitage when a devotee in distress of mind sought counsel of him. The son anxious that he should not have come in vain sought to help him. "If you will but repeat God's Name three times, you will find peace," he said. When the saint heard of it, he turned reprovingly on his son, saying: "My child, how little is your faith! Do you not know that if you utter the Lord's Name only once with all your heart, you will gain peace throughout eternity?" The secret lies in gathering up the whole of our being and laying it with unquestioning devotion at the feet of the Supreme: not trying to reach Him through calls for health and prosperity or through bigotted insistence on dogma and doctrine; not feeling that we are nearer to Him because we recite a special creed, worship a special Saviour, follow a special form.

God knows not higher or lower, greater or less. He who has ever stood face to face with the Lord or truly perceived His Divine Presence in a Christ or Buddha, realizes that Deity, incarnate or dis-incarnate, is beyond weight and measurement. Whatever the form He wears, always within shines the same resplendent glory; and time, place and country have no power to limit Him. Is it imaginable that the Supreme could calculate that in a special moment among a special people He would come to earth once and

once only to bless His children? Only the finite human mind could conceive such a plan. The Divine Mind is universal. It is alike to all beings, never a "respecter of persons." It knows no chosen people. It recognizes no chosen time. Every living creature from the beginning of creation, every soul in all the turn of cycles has been and will be equally dear to the heart of God. Is any true mother ever a partial mother? His Eternal Message, the Word that was in the beginning, has been sounding down the ages in unfaltering cadence, echoing from the Himalayas to Mt. Sinai, from the shores of the Daiti in Iran to the banks of the river Jordan. When it is spoken in your language, it seems highest to you; when in mine, it seems highest to me; because each can then best comprehend its spirit. But always is it the same Message uttered in endless forms and tongues to countless peoples. Truth must always be one, whatever the name we give it.

Should it, however, at this moment fall upon our ears in its full might, it would daze and deafen us. We must grow into the Universal, and along the way we fashion anew each day the God before Whom we bow. Every expansion of our consciousness brings a fresh conception of Deity and a readjustment of our ideals. As much of the Absolute as our understanding can cover, so much becomes our God, personal or impersonal according as we have transcended our own small personality. But only when we have layed aside the last remnant of "I" and "Mine" will our consciousness overflow the final barrier and cover the whole. Then for the first time shall we worship the One God, Who bears all Names, Who hears all prayers, Who receives all sacrifices, and Who loves with unmeasuring tenderness all living beings.

HYMN TO THE SUPREME.

Metrical Translation from the Rig-Veda.

As golden germ he rose in the beginning
To be the only Lord of all existence.
For earth and heaven firm supports He fashioned;
Who is the Lord, with sacrifice we serve Him.

Who rules supremely over all that breathes,
To Whom is subject all that wakes or slumbers,
Of all, both man and beast, the only king He;
Who is the Lord, with sacrifice we serve Him.

Whose might and power yonder snow-capped mountains,
The ocean and the rushing stream exhibit;
Whose arms extended are the poles of heaven;
Who is the Lord, with sacrifice we serve Him.

Who gives us breath and strength, and Whose commandment
All creatures must obey, the great gods even;
Whose shade is death, Whose image life immortal;
Who is the Lord, with sacrifice we serve Him.

May he not harm us, the earth's Creator,
Who lifted up the spreading heavenly regions,
By Whom the brilliant waters were created;
Who is the Lord, with sacrifice we serve Him.

Through Whom the heaven's and the earth's foundation,
The sun's effulgence and the firmament sustained are;
By Whom the middle realm of air is measured;
Who is the Lord, with sacrifice we serve Him.

To Whom with trembling hearts the two great armies
Look up for succor, on His will relying;
By Whom the sun goes forth and sheds its radiance;
Who is the Lord, with sacrifice we serve Him.

When in the time of yore the mighty waters
Came pregnant with all germs, the fire evolving,
As life-breath of the gods He thence proceeded,
Who is the Lord, with sacrifice we serve Him.

The powerful Himself surveyed these waters
With forces teeming, sacrifice producing;
He Who of all the gods the only God was;
Who is the Lord, with sacrifice we serve Him.

SANKARA, THE GREAT MONISTIC TEACHER.

Lecture by Swami Paramananda.

Sankara was born on the Southwestern coast of India at the close of the 8th century, probably about 788 A.D. His mother, having long remained childless, prayed to God to bestow on her the joy of motherhood; and it is said that in a dream an Illumined Being came to her and asked whether she would rather have many ordinary children or only one son who would be very wise but short-lived, and she chose the one wise child. Soon after she bore Sankara. He was sent early to school and was still at a very tender age when he finished his studies, for from his boyhood he had manifested phenomenal intelligence. At that time the system of education was very different from what it is at present. Boys went to live with their teachers, who were men of spiritual vision as well as learned scholars, and Sankara returned from his teacher's house filled with the determination not to marry but to devote himself wholly to the search after Truth. The ancient system of life in India was divided into four stages. First childhood, spent in the home under the loving protection and guidance of the parents. Then the student's life, passed altogether

with the teacher. During this the character was formed and the necessary training given to fit the boy for the third stage,—the householder's life, in which he was expected to marry and do his duty towards his family, his neighbors and the community at large. But Sankara wanted to take the step beyond that. He wished to enter at once into retirement, to take up the fourth stage or the forest life, in which one is free from household and social cares and can consecrate one's whole thought to God. His neighbors and elders tried to persuade him to abandon his radical views and lead a householder's life before renouncing the world. His mother also out of intense love declared that she could not part with him; and without her permission he would do nothing, for he had the deepest love and reverence for her. Thus he remained at home, but within him was always the overwhelming desire to give up all for the sake of Truth.

One day there was a great flood in that part of the country and when he went with his mother to bathe in the river, a crocodile seized him. "Mother, Mother," he cried, "I am lost! I am going to die! Now give me thy permission that I may at least die as a Sannyasin (one who has renounced)." The mother, overcome with grief, called: "Yes, yes, my son, I give my permission freely." It is said that as soon as she had spoken, the crocodile released his hold and Sankara was saved. But the mother now felt that she had no claim on him and soon after Sankara set out in search of a teacher who would initiate him into the religious life. He found Govinda, a celebrated Sannyasin, and asked to be taught by him. When the teacher inquired who he was, it is said that he burst into a beautiful song, in purest Sanskrit, which ran: "I am neither fire, nor air, nor earth, nor water, I am none of these. I am that Unchangeable Reality, Who is never born and never dies, Who is Unde-

caying, Ever-existent. I am That, I am That." Then he added simply: "I am the son of Sivaguru, a Brahmin of Kerala. My father died when I was a child and I was brought up by my mother. I have had a fair course of instruction in the *Sastras* (Scriptures)." Pleased with the boy and struck with his remarkable power, Govinda accepted him as a disciple and after proper preparation he invested him with the orange robe of the Sannyasin. He then began to teach him philosophy as he had himself learned it from his master Guadapada. It is not definitely known how long this period of training lasted, but it must have covered some years and at its close Sankara was sent to Benares, then as now the chief seat of learning in India. Here, although probably still in his teens, he began his great task of writing exhaustive commentaries on the Bhagavad-Gita, the Upanishads and the Brahma-sutras, which remain to this day the most authoritative works on Monistic Vedanta known. He also composed a number of profound and beautiful original writings both in verse and prose. Yet all this was accomplished in so short a time that when only a little over twenty-five years of age he began his life of a peripatetic Teacher.

The period at Benares is full of interesting incidents. One day the Master and some of his disciples were going for their accustomed bath in the Ganges, when a Pariah with his dog was seen approaching them. "Go away, make the road clear!" a disciple shouted, but the man walked steadily on until he reached Sankara. "How is it," he asked, "that you who teach that there is no distinction between soul and soul shrink from me as a Pariah?" Sankara, realizing the mistake of his disciple, replied in a series of five wonderful verses, each of which ends thus: "He who has learned to look on the phenomenal world in this monistic

light is my true teacher, be he a Pariah or a twice-born Brahmana. Such is my conviction." On another occasion, as he saw a student absorbed in the study of the Sanskrit Grammar, he is said to have reminded him of the futility of mere learning in another famous song, the refrain of which runs: "Worship the Lord, Worship the Lord, Worship the Lord, fool that thou art. When thou art face to face with Death, the repetition of rules of grammar will not save thee."

Having set forth on his wanderings, Sankara travelled over the whole of India followed by a large number of disciples. He first stopped at Allahabad to bathe in the confluence of the Jamuna and the Ganges. He then went to Mahishmati, where the great Pandit Mandana was living. Mandana was a man of large wealth, noted for his learning and for his avowed contempt for monastic life. Sankara invited him to a controversy and the agreement was that if Sankara won, Mandana was to relinquish his householder's estate and become a monk; while if Mandana was victorious, Sankara should cease to be a Sannyasin and consent to marry. Mandana's wife, Bharati, whose learning and gifts were very vast, was chosen as umpire. At that period in India there were many women of great erudition who went about freely teaching, for Hindu women did not lose their freedom until after the Mohammedan invasion. The controversy lasted four days and at its close Mandana was declared vanquished. Bharati then rose, however, and insisted that Sankara had defeated only one half of Mandana, that she was the other half and must be defeated in her turn. After gaining a second victory over the wife, both Bharati and Mandana renounced their home and later Mandana was placed at the head of the Sringeri Mutt, one of the four great monasteries which Sankara established in

the four quarters of India, while Bharati through her noble life of abnegation and devotion as well as by her rare gifts contributed a large share toward the Monistic revival founded by Sankara.

The great teacher is said to have finished his mission within thirty-two years and of these the last six or seven were spent in constant wandering and preaching. At the time of his coming India was in a state of great degradation, due to the multifarious ritualistic abuses which had gradually debased Buddhism and created a state of both social and monastic corruption. Having sprung out of the Vedic teaching as a powerful reform movement, it was now gradually absorbed back into that teaching, purified and exalted by the touch of Sankara's gigantic intellect and spiritual vision. When Hinduism needed someone to reestablish its real spirit, Buddha came. His mission was not, as many believe, to destroy the ideas of the Vedic religion, but to revive them, to free them from the many elaborate ceremonials and outward observances which had obscured them. When in time the teaching of Buddha lost its purity and became degraded in the hands of his followers, then appeared a new spiritual genius in the form of Sankara. Before him, however, early in the 8th century, there arose another great reformer called Kumarilla Bhatta, who reminds us strongly of Luther in his character and mission. He had lived in a Buddhistic monastery and been an earnest devout follower of the Buddhistic teaching. But one day in the lesson his teacher bitterly denounced the Vedic and all other Scriptures. This hurt Bhatta very much. It seemed little in accord with the spirit of the founder of the faith, so he withdrew from the class and went into seclusion. Some of his brother monks observed this and reported it to the teacher, saying: "This man is no longer

one of us; he has doubts about the teaching." As time went on his lack of sympathy became more apparent. He began to find fault with existing conditions in the Order; and his brothers, fearful that if he escaped he might reveal the secrets of the monastery, determined to make way with him. It is said that one night they dropped him from a tower, but as he fell he cried out: "If the Vedic Scriptures are true, that will save me," and he reached the ground unhurt. From that time he declared himself an open enemy of Buddhism and he went from place to place trying to revive the grandeur of the ancient Vedic teaching and bring enlightenment. His heart was full of desire to waken once more the real spirit of Truth and his learning, his earnestness, his devout life enabled him to gain many friends among kings and rulers.

Reacting against his own early monastic experience, however, he layed undue stress upon a life of worldly activity and became as sectarian and one-sided in this direction as the Buddhist Bhikshus were extreme in their advocacy of indiscriminate renunciation. It was given to Sankara to destroy these various sectarian quarrels by showing that all forms of religious thought had a common basis in the One and that all sects and creeds could meet on the lofty platform of pure monism. He furthermore tried to impress upon the people that liberation was not gained through elaborate ceremonies and ritualistic observances, but through the attainment of *Jnana* or Wisdom; that of all sacrifices *Atma-Yajna* or the sacrifice of the self was the highest, while the highest knowledge was the *Atma-Jnana* or knowledge of the Divine Self. Sankara's philosophy is strictly monistic. He does not admit the many. Although in this universe we see many, he called this variety or diversity in creation *Maya*, apparent but not real. *Maya*

does not mean exactly non-existent, nor does it mean delusion; it may be understood in the same sense as a dream, which so long as we are dreaming seems a reality, but which as soon as the dream is gone we know to be unreal. So Sankara explains this doctrine of *Maya* as false perception, the seeing of more than one, while the Real is only One. To perceive Unity underlying the apparent diversity is according to him the highest wisdom. That which obscures this clear vision of the One is *Maya* or nescience.

His philosophy rests on the three *Mahavakyas* or Great Sayings of the Upanishads— *Soham* (I am He), *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahmin) and *Tat twam asi* (That thou art). These three vital utterances form the foundation of his doctrine of monism. He did not admit that there was any difference between God and the individual being. They were identically the same. What we call name and form or duality had in his conception no real existence. Thus he tried to bring out the monistic spirit of the Vedanta by proclaiming wisdom as the supreme end. The Vedic teaching is divided into two parts: one deals with ceremonials, rituals, the various means by which men may acquire the things of this world,—health, wealth, prosperity; and the other deals entirely with God-knowledge. It was on the second part that Sankara layed greatest emphasis. Yet it is a mistake to suppose that his doctrine of wisdom was opposed to work and worship. On the contrary he taught that when work is performed without selfish desire or egotism, it serves as a great purifier; while of worship he says: "Of all the means which help the attainment of freedom, Bhakti or devotion is the greatest."

He sets down certain rules of spiritual practice, which he calls the four-fold disciplines. The first is *Nityanityavastu-viveka*, the discrimination between the permanent and

the transitory, the real and the unreal. The second is *Ihamutra-phalabhoga-viraga*, detachment from all hope of reward in this life or in heaven. The third is *Sama-damadi*, the control of body, mind and senses; and the fourth, *Mumukshutwam*, desire for liberation. Under the third discipline are classed six different practices: *Sama*, withdrawing the mind from earthly things; *Dama*, restraining the senses; *Uparati*, turning from the external for the sake of gaining higher knowledge; *Titiksha*, fortitude in heat and cold, pleasure and pain, praise and blame; *Samadhana*, concentrating the mind on higher things; and *Sraddha*, faith in the Scriptures and the words of the teacher. These are the means by which the individual consciousness may be lifted above the dominion of *Maya* and attain realization of its true identity which is Brahman the Absolute.

Monism had existed in India from time immemorial, but Sankara came as a new and powerful interpreter of it. The Vedic philosophy, however, includes both schools, the dualistic as well as the non-dualistic. It has a universal platform. It gives a place to every phase of thought and growth, because it recognizes that men can only follow that path to the Infinite which accords with their capacities. The Infinite can never be limited by name, form, ritual or ceremonies, although these may prove valuable aids when performed in the right spirit. But the true aim of life is to gain knowledge of the Supreme and that is what Sankara proclaimed through the length and breadth of India, with such dynamic force that he awakened the people from their spiritual lethargy and kindled within them a new faith and hope. All the prevailing superstitions and sectarian beliefs faded away before the clear light of his pure teaching and there followed a mighty revival of the lofty ideals of Vedanta.

NOTES ON THE VEDANTA.

By Swami Vivekananda.

The cardinal features of the Hindu religion are founded on the meditative and speculative philosophy and on the ethical teachings contained in the various books of the Vedas, which assert that the Universe is infinite in space and eternal in duration. It never had a beginning and it never will have an end. Innumerable have been the manifestations of the power of the Spirit in the realm of matter, of the force of the Infinite in the domain of the finite, but the Infinite Itself is self-existent, eternal and unchangeable. The passage of time makes no mark whatever on the dial of eternity. In Its super-sensuous region, which cannot be comprehended at all by the human understanding, there is no past and there is no future.

The Vedas teach that the soul of man is immortal. The body is subject to the law of growth and decay; what grows must of necessity decay. But the indwelling spirit is related to the infinite and eternal life; it never had a beginning and it will never have an end. One of the chief distinctions between the Vedic and the Christian religion is that the Christian religion teaches that each human soul had its beginning at its birth into this world; whereas the Vedic religion asserts that the spirit of man is an emanation of the Eternal Being and had no more a beginning than God Himself. Innumerable have been and will be its manifestations in its passage from one personality to another, subject to the great law of spiritual evolution, until it reaches perfection when there is no more change.

The Monistic Vedanta says that a man neither is born nor dies, nor goes to heaven, and that reincarnation is really a myth with regard to the soul. The example is given of the leaves of a book being turned. It is the book that

evolves, not the man. Every soul is omnipresent, so where can it come or go? These births and deaths are changes in Nature which we are mistaking for changes in us. Reincarnation is the evolution of Nature and the manifestation of the God within.

We would describe the soul in these words: The soul sword cannot cut nor spear pierce; it fire cannot burn nor water melt; indestructible, omnipresent is the soul. Therefore weep not for it. If it has been very bad, we believe that it will become good in time to come. The fundamental principle is that there is eternal freedom for every one. Everyone must come to it. We have to struggle, impelled by our desires, to be free. Every other desire but that to be free is illusive. Every good action, the Vedantist says, is a manifestation of that freedom. Now and then we know a moment of supreme bliss. Then it passes and we again see the panorama of the universe moving before us, and we know that it is but a mosaic work set upon God, Who is the background of all things.

The Vedanta teaches that Nirvana can be attained here and now, that we do not have to wait for death to reach it. Nirvana is the realization of the Self: and after having once known that, if only for an instant, never again can one be deluded by the mirage of personality. Having eyes we must see the apparent, but all the time we know what it is, we have found out its true nature. It is the screen that hides the Self, which is unchanging. The screen opens and we find the Self behind it. All change is in the screen. In the saint the screen is thin and the reality can almost shine through. In the sinner the screen is thick and we are apt to lose sight of the fact that the *Atman* (soul) is there as well as behind the saint's screen. When the screen is wholly removed, we find it really never existed, that we were the

Atman and nothing else; even the screen is forgotten.

The Vedanta system begins with tremendous pessimism and ends with real optimism. We deny the sense optimism, but assert the optimism of the super-sensuous: that real happiness is not in the senses, but above the senses: and it is in every man. The sort of optimism which we see in the world is what will lead to ruin through the senses. Abnegation has the greatest importance in our philosophy. Negation implies affirmation of the Real Self. The Vedanta is pessimistic so far as it negatives the world of the senses, but it is optimistic in its assertion of the real world.

The Vedic teaching is an expansive ocean on the surface of which a man-of-war can be near a catamaran. So in this ocean of Vedanta a real Yogi can be by the side of an idolater or even an atheist. What is more, in the Vedanta ocean, the Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian or Parsi are all one, all children of Almighty God.

All religions are at bottom alike. God has not left Himself without a witness in every heart and man should be willing to admit this. It is not the man who believes a certain something, but the man who does the will of the Father in heaven who is right. On this basis—being right and doing right—the whole world can unite.

As one can ascend to the roof by means of a ladder or a bamboo pole, a staircase or a rope, so divers are the ways and means to approach God; and every religion in the world shows one of these ways.

People partition off their lands, but no one can partition off the all-embracing sky overhead. So common man in ignorance says: "My religion is the only one, my religion is the best." But when his heart is illumined by true knowledge, he knows that above all the wars of sects and sectarians presides the one Indivisible, Eternal, All-knowing Bliss.

Sri Ramakrishna.

THE STORY OF SAVITRI.

From the Indian Puranas.

There was a king named Aswapati, generous, virtuous and full of valor. But he had no child. Hoping to win the favor of the gods, he retired to the forest and for eighteen years gave himself up to severest austerity, daily worshipping with sacrificial fire and sacred texts. It happened that once in the morning hour as he chanted with intensest fervor the hymn to Savitri, radiant spirit of devotion, the figure of a woman rose in the hollow centre of the glowing flame and blessed him, promising that his wife should bear him a daughter whose glory would be as her own. In the appointed time, as the fruit of their long pious vigils, a child was born unto the royal couple, so full of light and beauty that all said a goddess had come to dwell among them.

They called her Savitri after the holy prayer whose tireless repetition had drawn her down to earth. A lofty grace marked all her motions, her eyes shone with unwonted splendor, and though her heart seemed all gentleness and compassion, so ardent and undaunted was the spirit that abode within her that no prince dared approach to woo her. It grieved her father to see her thus unwed; and so when after her habitual worship in the Shrine she came to lay an offering of flowers before him, he said to her:

"Beloved daughter, the time is here when thou shouldst become a wife; choose whom thou wilt for husband and I will give thee unto him, for disgrace falls on that father who giveth not his daughter."

Savitri listened with bent head and reverently folded hands. Then speaking she craved of her father this one favor,—that before there was further question of her marriage, she be allowed to make a holy pilgrimage. Her

father and his councillors willingly consented.

A richly-gilded car was made ready and Savitri, followed by a long train of guards and servants with elephants carrying tents and furniture and food, began her pious journey from one Sacred Shrine to another. Despite her royal retinue, she led the life of a simple pilgrim,—bathing each morning in some running stream or lake, performing worship, cooking her own simple meal, then going in a palanquin to a nearby hermitage, where for hours, closely veiled, she would sit at the feet of some holy sage listening to his words of wisdom, or lapsing into prayer and meditation did he remain silent.

Thus months sped by. Then one day, while travelling through a densely shaded forest, she beheld from behind the silken curtains of her palanquin a youth moving towards them. He was tall and lithe and strong of limb, with so kingly a bearing that one wondered at the axe across his shoulder and the faggot bundle in his hand. Gently he stooped to aid a member of her train and then stood with courteous demeanor to let her pass. Her breath quickened, her heart throbbed, as she watched him; and having dispatched one of her servants to learn his name and dwelling-place, she gave orders to retrace their steps. Her soul had met its own, she must at once apprize her father. To this one only could she give herself.

Aswapati was in his audience chamber with the great sage Narada when Savitri entered and bowed down to touch her father's feet. Joyously he greeted her and asked: "Has my daughter found one worthy of her?"

A faint blush rose to Savitri's cheek and she spoke in low eager tones: "As we were passing through a certain wooded stretch, a young forester crossed our path. I sent one of my men to inquire and learned that he was the son

of a king, blind, dethroned and poor, who has withdrawn to the forest to end his days. The youth's name is Satyavan. He is strong yet gentle, humble yet a king in bearing. To no other can I belong."

The sage Narada spoke quickly: "Oh no, not he! Choose some other."

"Why?" asked Aswapati. "His poverty matters not. Savitri's dower will suffice for all."

"It is not that," the sage replied, "but a curse rests upon him and in a year he is doomed to die."

A deadly palor swept away the blush from Savitri's cheek. "Choose some other," the king pled with her. But she replied with unfaltering determination: "No, no; my heart is given, never can it be taken back. My soul has plighted troth and Satyavan alone can be my husband."

Thus Savitri became the wife of Satyavan and, casting aside her jewels and silken robes, went to live in the simple forest hermitage and serve his aged parents. But though the hours passed in sweetest communion, always was the dark shadow of the curse overhanging every joy. As the months went by, more ardent grew her devotion, more intense her worship, until three days before the time set by Narada she took the vow of the "three vigils," which meant that through three days and nights she would watch and pray and fast. Thus purified and strengthened, on the fateful morning she begged to go with her husband to the woods. He placed her in the cool shade of a quiet grove and through the weary hours she watched, listening with anxious intentness to the steady axe-blows deeper in the forest. Suddenly they ceased and Satyavan came staggering towards her murmuring: "My head! My head! Such pain!" Tenderly she layed him down and took his head upon her lap. But another seemed to shadow him. Raising

her eyes she beheld a majestic figure clad in densest black coming towards her from the jungle. She knew at once that it was Yama, Lord of Death. Seizing the soul of Satyavan, he started back calling to the quivering Savitri: "Farewell, my child. Be not grief-stricken. Death must come to every creature."

His words roused her spirit. Trembling no more, she rose and began to follow. Yama grew restless. The woman's presence troubled him.

"Savitri," he called, "ask any boon save your husband's life and I will give it you." "Grant to my father-in-law his sight," she asked, bending low in salutation. "Be it so," called Yama. "Now go home." But still the following footsteps struck on the Death-Lord's ears. "Another boon, if you wish," he called again, "but no further can you come." "Restore to my father-in-law his wealth and kingdom," Savitri asked once more. "So be it," was Yama's willing reply. "But go."

Deeper and deeper had grown the gloom, yet still the silent faithful figure followed. Another and still other boons were granted, yet on and on it came. At last Yama in impatience turned and said: "One more favor I will bestow, aught except your husband's life. Then I forbid you to come further."

With clasped hands and bending head she proffered this last request: "Bestow on me, Lord, a hundred sons and life long enough to see their sons." "They shall be yours," joyfully consented Yama. Still Savitri stood before him. "Why do you wait?" he asked. "You have your wish." Savitri raised her eyes and gazed full upon him. "But, Lord," she said, "a widow cannot marry." Yama was defeated. His word was given. With a loud laugh that echoed through the forest, he stooped and released the soul

of Satyavan.

Savitri sped on swiftest feet back to the body of her husband and again took his head upon her lap. "I have slept over-long. It is almost as if I had been dead," he murmured, opening at last his heavy eyes. "It was no dream, beloved one," she answered. "Come, let us go. The night is falling."

REPORTS

It is gratifying to read the Twelfth Annual Report of the Mayavati Dispensary, a Charitable organization established by the Ramakrishna Mission to relieve the distress along the lonely stretches of Himalayan hillsides, in a district where medical care is practically unattainable by the poor. The Dispensary now has its own building erected especially for its use and a qualified doctor who is also a member of the Mission. The year's summary of work shows that 1,173 patients were treated, among them being Mohammedans and Christians. This is a large number considering the long distances the sick have to travel to receive aid. As yet there is no provision for indoor patients, but in extreme cases a place is made in the Dispensary. It is hoped in time to extend this side of the work.

* * * *

The last Report of the Famine Relief Work carried on by the Ramakrishna Mission tells of new and alarming conditions in the Bankura District of Bengal. Here not only is there a pitiable scarcity of food, but the wells are drying up and people, driven by thirst, are drinking impure water and falling victims to disease. The Mission is working tirelessly to collect funds in order to dig new wells as well as to continue their distribution of food to the starving. All contributions for this noble work may be sent to The Vedanta Centre, where a Famine Fund has been started.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES."—Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

The Message of the East

UNIVERSITY OF

JULY 1916

Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE

1 Queensberry St., Boston, Mass. U. S. A.

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

VOL. V. JULY, 1916. No. 7

WORK AND RENUNCIATION.

Extract of Class Talk by Swami Paramananda.

When we have reached God-knowledge, bondage drops from us just as ripe fruit drops from the tree. But if we tear the fruit from the tree, it does not ripen. In the same way when our desires are unfulfilled within us, if we merely tear them out of our heart, the heart bleeds. Renunciation is never possible in that way. As our understanding unfolds, however, and we outgrow the little things of this world, just as children outgrow their toys, then our desires drop off of their own accord; it requires no tearing, no pain, no pang. Spiritual unfoldment must always take place gradually. We cannot force it. The first step in the practice of renunciation is to learn to work without selfish attachment. "Renunciation and performance of action both lead to liberation," Sri Krishna says in the Gita. "Children (the ignorant) alone say, not wise men, that the path of wisdom and the path of work are different. He who is truly established in one obtains the fruits of both."

One who is a true worker attains that Highest Ideal which is reached by a man of renunciation. Work is not a hindrance to spiritual growth, as some imagine; we are all working constantly. There is a pent-up energy within each one of us which must find expression; if we do not know how to direct it properly, we create more and more bondage for ourselves; but if we understand how to use

it, then every act liberates us and creates more wisdom, more strength and illumination. We must follow the path of action so long as we have to struggle to subdue ourselves; when everything within has become tranquil, then we can take up the life of contemplation. First is the battle, then the calm. We must all fight against the various forces which are trying to overthrow us. Again and again desire rises like a storm and shakes our whole being; only when it is conquered can we gain the state of meditation necessary to attain wisdom.

Our ignorance lasts so long as we confine ourselves to our lower nature and identify ourselves wholly with it. But when we acquire knowledge of That which is Unbounded, Unlimited, Perfect, then we naturally overcome all imperfections and the petty little tendencies which create bondage fall away from us. It is the little man who becomes jealous of another, envious of another, who tries to further his own interest by hurting another. As he grows bigger in spiritual wisdom his nature unfolds, his consciousness expands, until the whole universe becomes his abode and all mankind his family. This is what is meant by renunciation. It does not mean giving up external things; it means giving up limitation and allowing the soul to expand its circle. We do not drop anything, we merely live and act in a greater circle. We breathe more freely, enjoy more freely, give more freely.

He who has conquered his lower self by his Higher Self is always self-controlled and serene-minded, for the Higher Self is never affected by the dualities; it is the same in pleasure or pain, in honor or dishonor; it remains ever tranquil and unmoved. Such a soul has attained freedom. Nothing can overthrow him. Freedom is not license. We are free when nothing can strike us down; when our whole

nature is under our control; when we are the master of body, senses, mind and will; when we know that we are the Changeless Self. He whose heart is filled with this knowledge of Spirit has equal regard for friends and foes, for well-wishers and ill-wishers, for the righteous and the unrighteous. How then can he hate any creature, how can he shrink from any one, when to him all is One Supreme Reality? This is the basis of the brotherhood of man which Christ teaches; by this realization alone can we connect ourselves with all men.

No matter what our line of activity is, we must hold to this thread and follow it; for if we miss That, then we have nothing to support us. The path of wisdom, of work, of devotion, of meditation, the ultimate goal of all these is but One and that One is the Supreme Lord Who exists everywhere. He is in our work and He is also in our rest. He dwells in every heart. He is outside as well as within. When we realize Him, then this world can deceive us no more, for we feel ourselves connected with Him in Whom everything exists and finding Whom we can lose nothing.

Freedom is the motive of the universe. Freedom is its goal. This freedom is attained by the threefold means of work, worship and knowledge. Work means constant unceasing effort to help others and love others. Worship consists in prayer, praise and meditation. Knowledge is that which follows meditation. . . This world is a great gymnasium where we come to make ourselves strong. Strength is in goodness, in purity. Have charity towards all beings. Pity those who are in distress. Love all creatures. Do not be jealous of anyone. Look not to the faults of others. Remember that everything can be sacrificed for Truth, but Truth cannot be sacrificed for anything.

—*Swami Vivekananda.*

SONGS BY KABIR.

Translated by Rabindranath Tagore.

Wake, Oh Wake!

O my heart! the Supreme Spirit, the great Master, is near you: wake, Oh wake!

Run to the feet of your Beloved: for your Lord stands near to your head.

You have slept for unnumbered ages: this morning will you not wake?

The Moon Shines in My Body.

The moon shines in my body, but my blind eyes cannot see it:
The moon is within me, and so is the sun.

The unstruck drum of Eternity is sounded within me; but my deaf ears cannot hear it.

So long as man clamours for the *I* and the *Mine*, his works are as naught:

When all love of the *I* and the *Mine* is dead, then the work of the Lord is done.

For work has no other aim than the getting of knowledge:
When that comes, then work is put away.

The flower blooms for the fruit: when the fruit comes, the flower withers.

The musk is in the deer, but it seeks it not within itself: it wanders in quest of grass.

The Fish in the Water is Thirsty.

I laugh when I hear that the fish in the water is thirsty:
You do not see that the Real is in your home, and you wander from forest to forest listlessly!

Here is the truth! Go where you will, to Benares or to Mathura; if you do not find your soul, the world is unreal to you.

JNANA-YOGA.

By S. E. Waldo.

Jnana-Yoga is for the strong; for he who would follow it must be prepared to throw away all old idols, all old beliefs and superstitions, all desires for this world or another, and be determined only to seek and find Freedom. Without Jnana or true knowledge liberation cannot be ours. Our bondage is the result of ignorance and only wisdom can free us. The highest good is the realization of the Divine. It is beyond sense, beyond thinking, beyond even what we call consciousness. The Eternal Subject can never become the object of knowledge because such knowledge is only of the related, not of the Absolute. All sense-knowledge is limitation, it is an endless chain of cause and effect. This whole universe is one of relativity, ruled by the law of causation. It is only because that changless one Existence, which alone is real, shimmers through these veils of ignorance that we are able to rise above the relative, if only for an instant. It is these glimpses of our true nature, which is freedom, that help us in the struggle to transcend all limitation and realize Freedom Absolute. The real Self, the same in all beings, is never bound, never conditioned, is ever outside the Karmic wheel; and it is this real Self that makes every human being feel himself free, though his reason tells him that he cannot be so, being submerged in the ocean of law-bound phenomena.

On the plane of reason it is true that man is conditioned and limited. As a related being, man is not and cannot be free; and if the relative world alone were true, man would be merely the mechanical arrangement that some modern psychologists try to make him out to be. Psychology is called a science; but it cannot be a science of the soul, as its name implies, because there can be no science of the

undemonstrable. What this psychology demonstrates is all in relation to the fine nervous processes connected with thought. It measures the time and the amount of the mental reaction in response to external stimulation, but it has yet to find out the nervous processes answering to acts of memory or to abstract thinking. Certain nervous changes in the brain accompany all psychological processes, but the concomitant, or even the result of a thing, is not the thing itself. The thinking self, which relates itself to all sensations, which is the independent yet inseparable cause of all actions, is the something which binds together all the experiences of an individual, is the substratum which is a necessity in connection with all acts of the mind. This idea of "self" as the real subject of all experience, involving intelligence, emotion, feeling and will, is what Jnana seeks to expand and enlarge from *a* self to *the* Self, the One Unit Existence. That God and man are one is the constant teaching of the Upanishads and the Gita; but few only are able to penetrate behind the veil and reach the realization of this Truth.

The first thing to be got rid of by one who would become a Jnanin is fear. Fear is one of our worst enemies and the fruitful source of weakness. Next, we must throw away all beliefs. The true rationalist must believe nothing until he knows it to be true. He must go on fearlessly and follow his reason to its farthest limits. He must not stop anywhere on the road. When he begins to deny, all must go, until that which cannot be denied or thrown away is reached; and that is the real Self which was hidden from his eyes by layer after layer of ignorance. It is ever the same, that infinite, eternal, unchangeable Witness of the Universe, the Self of every being. When man perseveres in his attempt to reach the highest ideal he can conceive,

he will eventually find indeed that all the time he has himself been the one perfect Self and that all else is but a dream. While the dream lasts, it is real for us; but when it once has broken, we shall ever more know it for what it is, even though we may still have to dream again. To separate ourselves utterly from matter and all faith in its reality is true Jnana.

Abstract unity is the foundation of Jnana-Yoga. The idea of "One without a second" is called *Advaita* (non-dualism) and is the corner stone of the Vedanta Philosophy. The Advaita is a philosophy of the Absolute. It may be asked if it is possible to have anything like a philosophy of the Absolute in face of the all-embracing power of relativity which meets us at every step? The Advaita claims that it is such a philosophy; that, although relativity governs everything in the realm of experience, there is always a something which transcends experience and makes it possible. That whereby experience derives its being is the Absolute. It is certainly not given to us by or from experience. The latter may give us the antecedents and consequences of certain phenomena, but the nexus which invariably connects the two cannot be given by any experience whatever. Thought, the faculty or essence which synthesizes experience, is no result of material organization. This nexus of reason, this transcendental faculty of synthetic thought, the very essence of being, is the point from which the Advaita starts its theory of absolute idealism.

"Advaita maintains that thought implies being, as the absolute implies relative. Unity is inexpressible, but the very word implies duality and posits a something as against itself, till self-realization demolishes the illusion. Thought is being; both, in fact, are aspects, so to speak, of a something unique and one. This transcendental essence of being

is present in every existence, for existence itself implies it. It is that which is active in the consciousness of every sentient being, for it is the essence of thought. It is that which is implied in the very subsistence, position, or being of so-called lifeless things and substances. The whole of experience with its endless variety is but the mere functioning of the Absolute on its way to itself. Thought returns to thought and creates a universe of subject and object in the process." This world is our interpretation of the Brahman or the Absolute seen through the veil of Maya or appearance. This world is not zero; it has certain reality; for it *appears* because the Absolute *is*. Everything reveals the Absolute. Everything is the Absolute, yet apart from It. The Absolute is ever indescribable, beyond the reach of intellect or speech. The Advaitist uses for It the expression "Sat-chit-ananda," Existence-Knowledge-Bliss; but even that is a limitation, and the only thing we can really say of It is "not this, not this." It is like the pure white ray which is the synthesis of all the colors. The prism breaks the whole ray into the separate colors; and ignorance makes the Absolute, the One, appear as the infinite variety we see around us. To get rid of this ignorance and thus realize the Unity is the effort of Jnana-Yoga, as of the other Yogas; but this is the method which operates through reason and through philosophy joined to a tremendous will.

The Jnanin must be as intense as the narrowest sectarian in regard to his convictions, yet as broad as the heavens. He must absolutely control his mind. He must be able to be a Christian, a Buddhist or a Hindu; he must have the power to consciously distribute himself into all these different ideas and yet hold fast to the eternal harmony of all. Constant drill and discipline alone can enable

us to get this kind of control of ourselves. We have to learn not to identify ourselves with what we do, to hear nothing, see nothing, think nothing but the highest; we must day and night tell ourselves that we are not these seeming personalities, but that we are one undivided Existence. The greatest among the great teachers of this monistic Vedanta was Sankara. By solid reasoning he extracted from the vast mass of the Vedas the truths of the Vedanta, and on them built up the wonderful system of Jnana that is taught in his commentaries. He unified all the conflicting descriptions of Brahman and showed that these were but different aspects of the One Infinite Reality.

We are not drops to fall into the ocean and be lost; each one of us is the whole infinite ocean and we shall know it when released from the fetters of illusion. Infinity cannot be divided; there is but one Being, and every soul is that Being in full, not a part of it. The whole of the sun is reflected in each dewdrop. Appearing in time, space and causation, this Being Absolute seems as this universe; but behind all appearance is the one Reality. The denial of this lower or apparent self is unselfishness, and it will help us to free ourselves from the idea that we are mere bodies. We have to realize the truth that we are Existence Absolute. When we can do that we shall be in a position to give the best help to mankind, because knowing ourselves to be the All, desire will have been transcended and we shall want nothing for ourselves, but we shall seek only to give to others the truth that can make them free. The mind brings before us all our delusions, so we have to tell the truth to the mind incessantly, until it is made to realize it. Our real nature is All-Bliss, and all the pleasure we know is but a reflection of that. The Self is beyond either pleasure or pain, the unchanging and steady Reader, before

whom turn the leaves of the book of life.

"I and mine" is a superstition that we have lived in so long that it is well-nigh impossible to shake it off. Still, if we would rise to the highest, it must be got rid of, for this idea of separateness is the very root of all our misery, it is the "original sin" so to speak. Jnana is "creedlessness"; but that does not mean that it despises creeds. It only means that a stage beyond and above creeds has been gained. As all rivers roll their waters into the sea and become one, so all creeds should lead to Jnana or wisdom and there lose themselves, because even creeds are signs of that separateness that gives rise to sorrow. We have to attain "sameness," that is to look with equal eyes upon all. Jnana teaches that the world must be given up, but that does not mean abandoned. To live in the world but not to be of it is the true test of wisdom. Jnana demands that praise and blame, good and evil, pain and pleasure should be alike to him who would be a Jnana-Yogin. He must come out of all forms, get beyond all rules and all books, yet he must never condemn those who cannot rise above forms and creeds. Even in his heart of hearts he must not think himself superior to any other, he must see only sameness everywhere. All to him must be that One Existence.

These are the marks of the true Jnana-Yogin: He desires nothing save knowledge. All his senses are under perfect restraint; he suffers everything without murmuring, equally content if his bed be the bare ground, or if he be lodged in a king's palace. He is elated by no praise and he shuns no blame; he has given up all but the Self. He knows that all is unreal but the One. He has an intense desire for freedom. With a strong will he fixes his mind on higher things and so attains to peace. Seeing himself

as one with all existence, he works incessantly for others, giving up all personal results of his labors, whether their fruition be here or hereafter. Knowing himself to be one with the All, what can the Jnanin seek? Or where can he look for anything?

The Atman, the Divine Self, is the One Undivided Existence. It is beyond mind, memory, thought, or even consciousness as we know it. It is That because of which everything exists. The goal of the whole universe is to realize oneness with the One Existence. The Jnanin tells himself day and night that there are no beliefs, no sacred words, no heaven, no hell, no creed, no church, there is only the Atman. He analyzes everything by pure reason until he reaches Nirvana, which is the extinction of relativity. No conception of this is possible, because even the thought of it would be limitation. Jnana is not at all to be judged by any earthly result. We must not be like the vulture which soars almost beyond sight, but which has ever its eyes fixed on earth and is always ready to swoop downwards at the sight of a bit of carrion. The Jnanin asks not for health, nor for longevity, nor for prosperity, nor for heaven; he asks only for freedom. We are "Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute." Existence is the last generalization in the universe, so we exist, we know it; and bliss is the nature of existence absolute.

The more one has been purified and prepared by meditation, the more clearly do these flashes of realization come to him; therefore the Jnanin meditates constantly on that One Existence. Comfort is no test of truth, on the contrary truth is often very far from comfortable. If one really wishes to find truth, he must not cling to comfort. It is hard indeed to let go, but he who would become a Jnanin must do so. He must be pure, he must kill out all

desire and cease to identify himself with the body. Sacrifice is necessary, and it is this underlying truth, this immolation of the lower self, that has made sacrifice a part of all religions. All the propitiatory offerings to the gods were but dimly understood types of the only sacrifice that is of any real value; through the surrender of the apparent self alone can we realize the one Self, the Atman. Man is always perfect, or he can never become so; only he has to realize it.

If man were bound to external causes, he could only be mortal. Immortality can only be true of the unconditioned. Nothing can act on the Atman, the Unchangeable; but man must identify himself with That, and not with body or mind. Let him know he is the witness of the Universe and then he can enjoy the beauty of the wonderful panorama passing before him. As a Hindu sage said, "From a balloon no minor distinctions are visible, so when a man rises high enough he will not see good and evil people;" and again, "Once the pot is burned, no more can it be shaped; so with the mind that has once touched the Lord and has had a baptism of fire, it can no more be changed." Only the highest philosophy can rise to pure abstraction. To worship is inherent in man's nature, so he will ever personify his God in order to worship Him. This is very good, as long as the symbol, be it what it may, is worshipped only as a symbol of the Divinity behind and not as anything of value in and of itself. Above all we need to free ourselves from the superstition of believing a thing because "it is in the books." Book worship is a most frequent form of idolatry. To try to make everything,—science, religion, philosophy, all conform to what any book whatever says is simply tyranny.

There was once a stag, proud and free, and he talked

in lordly fashion to his son. "Look at me, see my powerful horns! With one blow I can kill a man, it is a fine thing to be a stag." Just then the sound of the huntsman's bugle was heard in the distance and the stag precipitately fled, followed by his wondering child. When they had reached a place of safety, the young stag enquired: "Why do you fly before man, O my father, you who are so strong and brave?" And the older stag answered, "My child, I know I am strong and powerful, but when I hear that sound, something seizes me and makes me flee, whether I will or no." How often is this the case with us! We hear the "bugle sound" of the laws laid down in the books, at once habit and old superstitions lay hold of us, and before we know it we have forgotten our real nature and are fast bound once more in the old fears and delusions.

Knowledge exists eternally and revelation too is eternal; it is not to be crystallized as final and then blindly followed. Revelation may and does come to any man who has fitted himself to receive it. Perfect purity is the essential thing; all religions teach that only "the pure in heart shall see God." Every attribute we give to God belongs to man also, only in lesser degree. When we rise to the Absolute we have to leave body and mind, imagination and the world out of sight. They no longer exist for us, because we have transcended them. Those who have attained "sameness" or perfection are said to be "living in God." All hatred is "killing the self by the self," therefore love is the law of life. This love is impersonal in the sense that it is given to all alike, to every being, human and below humanity. He who has realized the Self has forgotten all "separateness"; he has lost himself in the life principle of the Universe. He breathes with the breath of nature, sees with the eye of the All, and thinks with the thoughts of

every being. He is the All, he is "Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute," he is the true Jnanin or Knower. Such a one the Vedanta calls *Jivanmukta* or "Living Free." He has realized the Divinity within and to him this world appears in its true character. He sees only perfection, because he has penetrated through the veils of ignorance. No more can they conceal truth from his eyes. He has reached through philosophy the same goal that is the aim of the worker, the devotee, or the follower of Raja Yoga, for the end cannot be different; only the means of reaching it vary. All must come at last to that Infinite Ocean of Existence Absolute, which is of its very nature Absolute Bliss.

SELECTION FROM THE SAMHITA.

A Dialogue between the Sage Astavakra and King Janaka.

King Janaka asked:

How can Truth be perceived? How can Liberation be attained? How is Renunciation possible?

The Sage Astavakra replied:

If your aim in life, my child, is liberation, renounce the objects of the senses as poison, and drink in as nectar, Truth, contentment, kindness, straightforwardness and forgiveness.

Reflect well within your soul on the distinction between your real Self and your individualized existence. Rest in your true Self. The moment that you know your Self, you are liberated. The fruit of liberation is blessed peace.

You are present everywhere. The ups and downs of life affect you not. . . Bitten by the deadly serpent of Egoism, you consider yourself the doer. Drink the deathless draft of the faith "I am not the doer" and be happy.

This Self is the spectator. It is all-pervading, perfect,

one, free and actionless, without a companion, without desire and quiet.

Serene and knowing that One Immortal Spirit (Atma) as the real Self, why should you feel attached to the pursuit of wealth?

Knowing that Supreme Spirit, from which rises the universe like waves on the ocean, as your Self, why should you wander about like a beggar?

He is peerless among men whose noble soul is satisfied with the knowledge of Spirit and whose heart is purged of desire. He only is never hopeless.

The Yogi prays not for gain and grieves not for loss. His soul is full to overflowing with the nectar of immortality.

The quiet one seeks not his own interest, nor has he any feeling of antagonism towards the world. He passes his days unintoxicated by the wine of life and unaffrighted by the frown of death.

To him gold is not more precious than stone. Devoid of the sense of possession and released from the clutch of ignorance and passion, the knot of his heart is cut asunder forever.

The splendors of paradise or the squalor of poverty, the rise of fortune or the shadow of misfortune, the society of men or the loneliness of the wilderness, does not shake the serenity of the Yogi who has risen above the duality of pain and pleasure.

A high-souled disciple gleans a lesson from everywhere, feels thankful and learns it. Others, questioning all their lives, become bewildered. . . Men having earth-hunger ignore the knowledge of the Truth.

Knowing that cares and anxieties are the cause of the miseries of human life, the wise man lives untroubled by

care and anxiety, without thirst, peaceful and content.

No one knows how much of his misery is due to strain and stress. Blessed are they who understand this and live in quietness.

Only those who work dispassionately and selflessly are happy. Duty must be done for duty's sake.

You are not body nor have you any body. You are neither actor nor enjoyer. You are the ever-conscious Self, the eternal witness. Be independent and walk happily.

Knowing that you are in all things and that all things are in you, banish the feeling of mine-ness. Cast away egoism and be blissful.

DESIRE.

Familiar Teachings by Swami Ramakrishnananda.

This heart of ours is like a mirror which gives a perfect reflection but which has been so thickly covered over with dust that nothing can be seen in it. The more you can rub off the dirt, the more will you be able to see yourself in it; when you have been able to remove the last speck of dust, you will get a perfect image of yourself. What is that dust which hides the image? Desire.

There was once a great *Tyagi* (one who is practising strict renunciation). He cared for nothing in the world, only he had a little love for his *Kopinam* (loin cloth). He kept it hanging on a tree and sometimes the rats used to come and gnaw it. This made him very angry. "What!" he said, "I have nothing in the world but this *Kopinam* and the rats want to take that from me?" So he got a cat to keep off the rats. But a cat requires milk, so he asked one of his disciples to bring him a cow. A cow, however, needs fodder, so he begged for a pair of bullocks to till the ground. Thus he added one possession to another until

finally, unable to care for them all, he married a wife and became once more a householder.

Our Master, Sri Ramakrishna, used to say that just as when you catch hold of one end of the creeper which grows over the surface of still water, the whole tank will come; so if you have one worldly desire, that connects you with the entire universe. When I remember out of what I have come, that naked I came into the world, not possessing anything, then I see that all these accumulations are foreign; they can never really belong to me, nor can I take them with me when I go. Yes, naked I came and alone I shall have to go. This aloneness or singleness is what is called purity.

Selfish desire is always dangerous. Sometimes we think that we have wholly killed it out, but somewhere in our mind there lingers a small remnant and as from a spark left in the corner of the hearth may come a big fire, so out of that small remnant may spring a huge fire of desires. The only way to eradicate selfish desire is to love God with your whole soul, then all other desires will drop off.

Pleasure is a positive thing and pain is a positive thing. God did not give you these eyes and these ears and this body merely to be annihilated. He gave them to you that you might enjoy. When he gave you hunger, He also put the food there to satisfy it. When He gave the senses, He also put the Universe there to be enjoyed by them. But when a man finds out that these little pleasures of the flesh are nothing compared to the infinite pleasures of the spirit, then he wants to renounce; not, however, merely for the sake of renunciation, but because he has found something better.

Why should a man give up? Why should he be unselfish? Rather if he wishes to be selfish, let him be truly so.

Let him not be satisfied with anything short of infinity. Let him not be content with the little finite things of this world. Let his ambition be infinite. Let him only give up because he knows he will get a great deal more. Let him give up this world, which can only bring perishable happiness, in order to gain God, Who can give him everlasting bliss.

God is the only Reality among all these unrealities. This world is vague, I am vague, you are vague, but God is absolutely real. This body will break and melt away, but God will never break or melt away. Everything else may change, but He never changes. He is always the same. That God is inside your own heart. Seek Him and all your desires will be eternally satisfied.

THE GOOD AND THE PLEASANT.

The present-day utilitarian tendency in all thought and action has naturally led men to make happiness the end of life and to believe that it consists in a maximum of pleasure with a minimum of pain. Pleasure in its turn is identified with physical comfort, leisure, amusement, the sense of ownership. This point of view more than anything else is responsible for the artificial standards of life, the social unrest and discontent existing everywhere. "I asked myself what is that, ever since earliest years, thou hast been fretting and fuming, and lamenting and self-tormenting on account of?" Carlyle writes in "Sartor Resartus." "Say in a word: is it not because thou art not Happy? Because the Thou (sweet gentleman) is not sufficiently honored, nourished, soft-bedded, and lovingly cared-for? Foolish Soul! . . . . . There is in man a Higher than Love of Happiness: he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find Blessedness! Was it not to preach forth this

same Higher that sages and martyrs, the Poet and the Priest, in all times, have spoken and suffered; bearing testimony, through life and through death, of the Godlike that is in man, and how in the Godlike only has he Strength and Freedom? . . . . Love not Pleasure; love God. This is the Everlasting Yea, wherein all contradiction is solved: wherein whoso walks and works, it is well with him."

A clear distinction between the good and the pleasant, between happiness and blessedness, has ever been a fundamental characteristic of Eastern Thought, preëminently that of India. "The good is one thing, the pleasant another," we read in the Katha-Upanishad. "These two, having different objects chain a man. It is well with him who clings to the good; he who chooses the pleasant misses his end. The good and the pleasant approach man: the wise goes round about them and distinguishes them. Yea, the wise man prefers the good to the pleasant, but the fool chooses the pleasant through greed and avarice." To make pursuit of happiness the aim of life, Vedanta claims, tends at once to commercialize religion, to reduce it to a question of profit and loss. Reward and punishment, Heaven and Hell in some form, inevitably assume a large part in it and furnish the ultimate motive for action. Observance of duty and the practice of virtue soon grow to be regarded as the measure of highest attainment, while morality becomes an accepted substitute for spirituality.

No religion, it is true, can without injury to itself discard the restrictions and regulations of morality; but in no sense can these injunctions of the moral code be considered to constitute religion. They are only stepping-stones leading to it. The function of morality is to deal with human duties, the function of religion is to expand the ideal of duty and furnish a higher and higher motive

for its performance. The practice of ethics cultivates man's discriminative faculty; the practice of religion unfolds his spiritual nature. The one purifies his ego; the other lifts him above it. Morality rests upon duality, spirituality upon unity. Morality teaches man to choose wisely between two, spirituality teaches him to seek the One. And by what path does it lead him? The path of renunciation. He must turn from the pleasant and seek the good. Such is the uncompromising answer of every great spiritual Teacher. Having "kept the moral law from his youth up," he must now "sell all he has" and follow the Christ-Ideal. This does not mean any sudden revolution in his outer mode of living. All the changes called for in the spiritual life are primarily subjective. Man changes himself, and his outer world gradually reshapes itself in his new image; for our environment is merely the shadow of our own thought and character.

How is this inner change brought about? By the practice of non-attachment. Man cannot rise above a plane if he holds to anything on it, whether good or evil. That is the reason why *Vairagyam* or dispassion is so earnestly preached by the Vedic Sages. Casting aside the unpleasant does not free man so long as he clings to the pleasant. He must "regard alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat," if he would fight a winning battle; he must not exult in good fortune or grieve over ill-fortune; but, as Plato puts it, he must seek to reach that "point midway between the two at which the mind reposes from both." From that serene height of the witness he is able to view dispassionately the shifting panorama of his experience. Very quickly he perceives that there are no fixed dividing lines between pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow; that one fades and melts into the other so imperceptibly

that what at one moment seemed a pleasure has become a pain, while that which sprang into life as sorrow has proved itself a joy and blessing. Having realized this fundamental truth, he is able to accept with a quiet mind the ebb and flow of outer conditions. But this does not represent a state of numbness. He has not ceased to feel. He has merely mastered the great lesson taught in the Bhagavad-Gita that "The pleasures that are born of the senses are ever the sources of misery, they come and go. The wise man delighteth not in them"; but "He whose joy is within, whose pleasure is within and whose light is within, that one, being well-established in God, attains to absolute freedom."

All our suffering in life grows out of a false sense of values. Our ideas of important and unimportant, of lasting and fleeting, of real and unreal are vague and confused. The experience of the passing moment looms so large that it shuts out the whole universe and even God. When, however, we have learned through countless tears and bitter failures to readjust our scale of values and put all things in their proper place, to keep God always as the high light in our life-picture, at once our false perspective is corrected, the good becomes the pleasant, and the weary inner conflict which has so long consumed our strength is at an end. Then for the first time are we able to direct our whole energy towards accomplishing our task of helpfulness in the world and we begin to know that state of blessedness which is above all happiness.

With what pain the poor tormented souls of today seem to seek for truth, which is there, quite simple, within their reach! Yet is not that very pain in the search after truth a prayer? When we feel the need of God, it is because He is quite close to us. —*Paul Bourget.*

REPORTS.

In response to repeated and urgent invitations from students in Los Angeles Swami Paramananda left Boston on the 7th of June and made a direct journey to the Pacific Coast, stopping only for a day at the Grand Canyon. He arrived in Los Angeles on Monday the 12th and held a first meeting on the 15th. The following Sunday evening he began a course of public lectures at Symphony Hall, his subject being "Spiritual Awakening the Saving Grace for this Age." There were over 200 people present. On Tuesday afternoon, the 20th, the Swami was invited to speak in one of the churches on "India's Contribution to the Thought World"; and in the evening he gave the first of a regular series of Class Lectures at Assembly Hall on "Discrimination between the Real and the Unreal." The attendance at this meeting proved so much larger and the interest so much greater than was anticipated that it has been decided to secure Music Hall for this Course. The Swami will also hold a Meditation Class every Thursday evening. Such constant demands are being made upon him both in Los Angeles and the suburbs that it is probable that he will remain there during the greater part of the summer.

* * *

On the Thursday evening preceeding his departure for the West Swami Paramananda entertained at dinner over 60 friends and students, himself preparing all the dishes served. Tables were arranged for everyone in the Library and hall of the Centre. At the close of the dinner, there were many impromptu speakers. Mr. Orth sent a ripple of laughter over the company by a number of amusing anecdotes; Mrs. Spaulding touched the hearts of all by her earnest words of appreciation; while Mr. Clark repeated

the humorous stories told by Emerson, James Russell Lowell, Dr. Holmes and others at a luncheon given by him in honor of Bret Harte. After a further half hour of gayety, the Swami brought back the quieter, more earnest atmosphere of the Centre by a few closing words, in which he said that such moments of loving happy intercourse were as much a part of the work of Vedanta as the teaching and preaching, since the great aim of the Centre was to establish a feeling of unity and brotherhood among all men and to show how religion may be made a part of every act of life.

* * *

For the present all the Services and Classes will continue as usual at the Vedanta Centre of Boston. The attendance was excellent throughout the month of June and there was little to indicate a closing of the season.

* * *

A letter from Geneva just received tells us that the group of earnest students who banded themselves into a Centre for the study of Vedanta during the two seasons that Swami Paramananda lectured and taught there, still continue their weekly meetings. Last year they suspended them at the end of May, but this year everyone was so reluctant to give them up that it was decided to carry them through the month of June. They are holding faithfully together always in the hope that the Swami will be able to come to them again in the near future.

* * *

The tireless unselfish work of the members of the Ramakrishna Mission is becoming an ever larger factor in relieving the suffering, educating the ignorant and uplifting the poor of India. Everywhere their institutions are increasing in size and multiplying in number. The Home

of Service at Benares, which recently completed its 15th year, has for example within the last twelve months erected five more wards for infectious diseases on the newly acquired land donated by several of its many friends; while the Rani of Searsole has contributed a generous sum towards the construction of a new General Ward for the Home of Service at Kankhal in the Himalayas. In connection with this will be a larger Dispensary, while the old Dispensary will be turned over to the use of the School for the very poor which was started by the Home some time ago, but which so far has been forced to hold its classes in an open verandah of the hospital exposed to wind and weather. At the Vrindavan Home of Service they have also been doing excellent work. In one month alone, so their last report tells us, they took care of 2780 patients.

Besides these and many other regular institutions for the help of the poor and unfortunate, we hear on all sides of smaller organizations laboring under the direct inspiration and guidance of the Mission. A Ramakrishna Society at Cuddapah in the Madras Presidency, which began by establishing a free Reading-Room, has now opened a Free Night School for girls and boys; and by the same mail we learn that an energetic body of workers banded together under the name of the Entally Ramakrishna Archanalaya and devoted to distributing food to the poor and caring for the sick and infirm in their homes, has just celebrated its 16th Anniversary. Many of the Swamis of the Order, with the President, Swami Brahmananda, came from the Monastery on the Ganges to take part in the Celebration. There was a religious Service with addresses by Swami Sharvananda and others, besides which a large number of poor people were fed. The Society is now trying to collect funds to build a special house for its work.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

The Message of the East

AUGUST 1916

Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE

1 Queensberry St., Boston, Mass. U. S. A.

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

VOL. V. AUGUST, 1916. No. 8.

The individual's life is in the life of the whole, the individual's happiness is in the happiness of the whole; apart from the whole, the individual's existence is inconceivable: this is an eternal truth and is the bed-rock on which the universe is built. To move slowly towards the infinite whole, bearing a constant feeling of intense sympathy and sameness with it, being happy in its happiness and being distressed in its affliction, is the individual's sole duty. Not only is it his duty, but in its transgression is his death, while compliance with this great truth leads to life immortal. This is the law of Nature; and who can throw dust into Her ever-watchful eyes? None can hoodwink society and deceive it for any length of time. However much there may have accumulated heaps of refuse and mud on its surface, still, at the bottom of those heaps, the life-breath of society is ever to be found pulsating with the vibrations of universal love and self-denying compassion for all. We ignore this sublime truth and though we suffer a thousand times for our folly, yet in our absurd foolishness, impelled by the brute in us, we do not believe it. We try to deceive, but a thousand times we find that we are deceived ourselves, and yet we do not desist! Mad that we are, we imagine we can impose on Nature! With our short-sighted vision we think that ministering to the self at any cost is

the be-all and end-all of life. Wisdom, knowledge, wealth, strength, prowess, and what else Nature gathers and stores for us, are all only for diffusion, when the moment of need is at hand; we often forget this fact, put the stamp of "*mine only*" upon what is thus entrusted to us and sow the seed of our own ruin! To work alone we have the right, the result of our work lies in the hands of the Lord. We can only pray: "O Thou Eternal Spirit, make us spiritual; O Thou Eternal Strength, make us strong; O Thou Mighty One, make us mighty."—*Extract by Swami Vivekananda. Translated from the Bengalee.*

CAN DESTINY BE OVERCOME?

Lecture by Swami Paramananda.

Physical science explains the laws of nature, but it fails to explain the law of human life. It shows us how in the outer world certain causes produce certain effects, but it does not tell us why among men one is born to misery and misfortune while another enjoys every blessing and privilege. If it is the law that without a cause there can never be an effect, what then can be the cause of this difference? The usual answer of religion is that it is the Divine will, that God rewards and punishes according to His will. But why should He make such distinctions? There must be some reason, for an arbitrary Ruler who rewards or punishes His children according to His whim could not be an Ideal God. There must be some more satisfactory explanation. The Indo-Aryan Sages and Philosophers found it in the law of Karma, the law of cause and effect applied to human life. They did not blame the Supreme Deity for the inequalities existing everywhere, but they placed the cause in man himself. Man, they said, is responsible for his own destiny. His present life is nothing but the result of

what he has done in the past; for whatever we sow, that we reap. We cannot gather a harvest contrary to the seed we have sown. We cannot bribe the Almighty. If we wish to reap a better harvest, we must enrich our own life. We must live in accordance with our highest instincts of right and wrong. If we do not, then we must expect to suffer, for evil actions inevitably produce suffering, however we may try to escape from it.

We cannot break the law and there is no one in the higher realms of consciousness who will help us break it. God has not put us under it; our own hand has bound on the fetters which drag us down and tie us to certain conditions. Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad-Gita: "The Almighty Lord does not partake of the good or evil deed of any being. Wisdom is covered by ignorance, thus mortals are deluded"; and they imagine that God is blessing or punishing them. It is ignorance alone that causes their bondage and suffering. So long as we are under the sway of ignorance and imperfection, we carry within ourselves the seed of unhappiness, and all our efforts to avoid it will be vain. The only escape from suffering is not in trying to run away from outer conditions, but in striving to understand the law which governs them. Often, when people are in great suffering and have not proper understanding, they think that the best way to end their misery is by committing suicide. But is the law so weak, so limited that man can escape from it by simply ending his life here? Impossible. What he has created will accompany him. The Soul is not an object which we can destroy by any act of ours. Neither can we destroy the cause of misery in that way. It will last as long as we remain in ignorance of the law.

Man must begin to study his own life; he must look

into his own character; he must analyze his own thoughts and actions; and very soon he will find that the effects in this life are caused by what he himself thinks and does. As Buddha says: "All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him." And the law which is working in this life also governs other realms of existence; therefore if a man observes the law carefully, he can easily avoid all complications and difficulties and make his destiny what he will. He must, however, set to work with earnestness. It is not the one who merely talks or quotes from the Scriptures, but the one who lives, who learns and applies the law, he alone overcomes all adverse conditions and reshapes the course of his life.

We cannot expect to get something we have not earned; and the thing we do not deserve we cannot retain, even when it is given to us. A story is told in the Indian Scriptures that once the Great God Siva, one of the Hindu Trinity, was asked by Parvati to help a man in great misery. "It is impossible," was Siva's answer. "Impossible?" Parvati exclaimed. "Nothing is impossible to You." "I will prove it to you," Siva replied. The man was at the time walking through a forest full of anxiety as to how he could get something for his bodily maintenance and the God Siva placed a bag of gold directly in his path; but as he was passing the spot, the man chanced to close his eyes and missed the gold. This is what is happening all the time. We must have the right to everything that we desire. We must earn it.

All our thoughts and actions, even the smallest, combined together make up our destiny and determine our happiness or unhappiness. This is a fact, whether we recognize it or not. Through what he says and does each one is working out his own salvation or misery. Therefore he must guard his every thought and action, for sometimes even a little thought may be the seed from which will spring a great tree of activity bearing good or evil fruit. But this does not mean that when suffering comes as the result of wrong doing, man is helpless. No. What he has himself created, he has also the power to counteract. He may not be able to wholly undo the results of a past mistake; but understanding what it is, he does not waste his energy in useless rebellion or repentance. He meets it cheerfully and tries to learn a lesson from it; for every experience, whatever its nature, comes as a blessing when one understands the law. This is especially marked in the lives of people in the East, even among the most ignorant. When they are suffering, they do not give way to despair, because they know that suffering is not a lasting thing; that misfortune is a cloud which rises and must have its setting; that it is nothing but an effect of their own actions and thoughts; and as the cause is finite, no infinite result can be produced from it.

When we understand the law, we become patient and strong-hearted and we are able to meet all the conditions of life bravely. Why should we grow impatient or downhearted when we know that nothing can happen contrary to the law and that therefore if something has come to us, it must have a deep meaning and purpose? Often we hear the complaint that good people always suffer while evil-minded people seem to triumph here. What is meant by this? Because the selfish and worldly-minded have more

sense pleasures and luxuries, are they for that reason more fortunate? Are these what we want to get out of life? They should not be the ideal of human existence. It should be to rise above bodily suffering and pleasure; to bear with equal-mindedness whatever comes, knowing that all kinds of experience are necessary to unfold our higher nature and increase our spiritual strength. When we realize that this life is neither for pain nor for pleasure, that its value is not according to a man's bodily conditions, but that it is for the manifestation of the Soul, for the attainment of freedom, our ideas of good and evil fortune change. And when we awaken to the fact that the fetters which hold us down are not from the outside but are within, that we have bound ourselves by our own desires and imperfections, then we cease to complain or blame others. Who can ever cause you suffering or disturbance if you have that serenity of heart which comes from knowledge that you are not the body, you are not a puny mortal, but that you are a mighty Soul, a child of God? That knowledge will at once place you on a rock which nothing can move or shake.

An understanding of the law of Karma helps us to avoid mistakes and follow the path which leads to the right goal. The effect of mistakes is inevitable. If a man out of mistake puts his hand into the fire, it burns. Whether he does it consciously or not, it must burn him. Similarly our actions produce their effects. And what are we to learn from these effects? That we should not repeat the same ignorant actions. Everything that we do—our talking, working, walking, thinking, every action indeed brings a reaction and we must meet this whether we have acted consciously or unconsciously. But how are we to avoid the results of unconscious actions? Sri Krishna tells Arjuna in the Gita: "Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest,

whatever thou offerest in oblation, whatever thou givest and the austerities thou performest, do that as an offering to the Lord. Thus thou shalt be freed from the bonds of action that bears good and evil fruit." In other words, if we can surrender ourselves wholly to God, then we shall become free from all the binding effects of life. We may live in the world but we shall not be touched by it, just as the lotus leaf floats on the water but is never wet by it. When we begin to realize what life is and what is its relation to God, to nature, and to all human beings, we begin to see everything in a different light. We do not have the attitude of condemning anything. If we find good people suffering, we do not feel that there is no reason for it; we do not rise in opposition declaring that there is no justice in the universe. This impulsive rebellious spirit comes only through ignorance.

The Law of Karma must not be confounded with the morbid idea of Fate—that what is must be. It does not throw that weight on one's heart. On the contrary it declares that no condition is permanent, but that if man wishes to escape from the present fruits of his actions, he has only to direct his energies steadily in another channel and he will counteract the results of past errors. It tells him: "Let the past go, let it not hang over you. Even if your life has been full of mistakes, it will not do any good to dwell on them. Take some Ideal which you can look up to and follow that with your whole heart and soul. Constantly hold your mind fixed on that and direct all your actions towards that. Very soon you will become free from your imperfections."

If we have formed a bad habit, or if a feeling of hatred or jealousy is burning in our heart, the surest and quickest way to conquer it is to keep our thought fixed on some

higher object, for often by fighting our imperfections we make them stronger. Whenever we are full of despair because our life and strength and understanding seem so limited, it is best to forget as much as we can those little ideas and look at things which are bigger and nobler. No matter where we may be, on a high plane or a low plane, we are all going through the process of evolution and sooner or later we must all come to perfection. We should always try to give people hope and encouragement when they are depressed. Sometimes when a man's heart is sinking into a state of hopelessness, just a word of hope and sympathy will bring him up. Everybody can find fault with us and remind us of our weaknesses, but he is a true friend who can come and plant the seed of faith in our heart and show us that we have the same possibilities of perfection in us as a Christ or a Buddha.

Our destiny lies in our own hands and we can mould it as we will. Let us therefore diligently set to work and strive with patience, perseverance and determination to uproot all the imperfections which now seem to be a part of our nature and which cause all our suffering. By right thought and right action we can remove every fetter that binds us and make our lives a constant blessing both to ourselves and to our fellowmen.

Lift up your head at last, as free from slavery. Dare to look up to God and say, "Make use of me in the future as Thou wilt. I refuse nothing that seems good to Thee. Lead me whither Thou wilt. Clothe me in whatever dress Thou wilt. Is it Thy will that I should be in a public or private condition, dwell here or be banished, be poor or rich? Under all these circumstances I will make Thy defence to men."—*Epictetus.*

THE FRUITS OF ACTION.

From the Mahabharata. Anugita-Parva.

The Brahmana said: The acts, good and bad, which the *Jiva* or individual Soul does are not subject to destruction. Upon attainment of body after body, those acts produce fruits corresponding to their nature. As a fruit-bearing tree in its season yields a large quantity of fruit; so merit, achieved with a pure heart, yields a plenteous harvest of happiness. In similar manner wrong action, done with a sinful heart, produces a plenteous harvest of misery.

Because of its subtlety and its unmanifested nature, the Soul does not become attached to anything even after attaining a body. Therefore it is called the Eternal Brahman. That is the seed of all creatures. It is because of it that all living creatures live.

Whatever acts, good or bad, the Soul has done in a former body, the results of these have surely to be enjoyed or endured by him. By such enjoyment or endurance former acts are exhausted; but other acts again accumulate, until the Soul succeeds in acquiring a knowledge of those duties (spiritual practices) which lead to Emancipation.

Regarding this, I shall tell thee, O best of men, those acts by which the Soul, while travelling through the round of rebirths, becomes happy.

Gifts, self-discipline, the practice of continence, self-restraint, tranquillity, compassion for all creatures, restraint of the passions, abstention from cruelty as also from appropriating what belongs to others, refraining from doing even mentally all acts that are false or injurious to any living creature on the earth, reverently serving mother and father, honoring Deity and guests, devotion to teachers, piety, purity, constant control of all organs and faithful performance of all good actions: these are said to constitute

the conduct of the good.

From observance of such conduct arises Righteousness, which protects all creatures eternally. He who takes refuge in that Righteousness will never attain a miserable end. It is by the conduct of the good that the world is restrained in the paths of Righteousness when it falls away. Deliverance from the world takes place for that one who acts righteously and well on every occasion.

THE IDEA OF SIN.

Adapted from the Brahmavadin.

What sin is, it is not quite easy to define; nevertheless all are agreed that it results from the violation of the moral law, so that the conception of sin and the conception of morality have developed side by side. The slow and steady evolution of ethics in association with religion is one of the most interesting phenomena in the religious history of man. It is needless to say that the determination of right conduct of individuals in society is dependent upon the nature of their social constitution. Tribal morality is different from national morality, and this again is different from universal morality. It is not at all proper to say that primitive tribal religions have no power of controlling and guiding human conduct because our modern ideas of right and wrong are not to be found embodied in their codes. To expect to find higher forms of morality in association with lower forms of religion is as unintelligent as to expect the monkey to give birth to man. But because lower forms of religion are not associated with comparatively higher forms of morality, are we at liberty to hold that lower forms of religion have all been non-moral, if indeed not immoral, or that tribal life is always degraded?

"I have lived," says A. R. Wallace, "with communities

in South America and the East who have no laws or courts but the public opinion of the village freely expressed. Each man scrupulously respects the rights of his fellows, and an infraction of those rights rarely or never takes place. In such a community all are nearly equal. There are none of those wide distinctions of education and ignorance, wealth and poverty, master and servant, which are the product of our civilization; there is none of that widespread division of labour, which, while it increases wealth, produces also conflicting interests. . . . Now, although we have progressed vastly beyond the savage stage in intellectual achievement, we have not advanced equally in morals. . . . It is not too much to say that the mass of our populations have not at all advanced beyond the savage code of morals, and have in many cases sunk below it."

Yet it cannot be denied that the ideal of ethical life has grown higher; and with the progress of ethical evolution the conception of sin has also passed through various modifications. At first sin is conceived of as a violation of the commands of the gods; then it is looked upon as a violation of Divine laws; and lastly it is regarded as a contradiction of the spiritual nature of man. Some modern thinkers mix up all these three ideas together in their vague conception of what sin is. This confusion, however, is due to the fact that in the progress of human civilization the successive stages of growth overlap one another. In tribal organization disobeying the commands of persons in authority is not considered a sin; but disobeying the commands of the gods is ever of the nature of sin. In all tribal communities kinship being the basis of love, the benevolent gods and goddesses are all looked upon as kindly relations and sin is that which brings a feeling of alienation between the tribal gods and their worshippers. To re-establish this feeling of

kinship becomes one of the chief purposes of sacrifice. Thus the idea of sin with sacrifice as its remedy seems to have existed from very early times in the history of religion.

It is also this association of sin and sacrifice that is chiefly responsible for the development of the religion of Law, with which rises a new conception of sin. Both Mosaism and Brahminism came into existence in this way; and in the *Smritis* or law-books of the Brahmins ceremonial pollution and sin have frequently the same name given to them, while the commands of Moses are largely concerned with external "sanctifying unto cleanness of the flesh." The Law of these nomothetic forms of religion is full of regulations bearing on the conduct of man towards the Higher Power or Powers as well as towards his fellowman, and any disregard of these regulations is classed as a sinful act. Morality based on ritualistic purity, however, is very unstable and society gradually learns that if selfishness and sensuality are to be subdued, it must be through the influence of spirituality by learning that yielding to the temptations of the flesh is inevitably productive of misery. Thus we reach the third stage in the development of the idea of sin.

The highest conception of the nature of sin is dependent on the recognition of the great principle that the promptings of the flesh are generally opposed to the interests of the spirit. Civilized man brands all our ape and tiger tendencies with the name of sin. Both the ethics of Vedanta and Christian ethics are built upon this opposition between the flesh and the spirit; only Christianity does not rationally explain the cause and the nature of the opposition. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit," says the Gospel of St. John; and St. Paul declares: "To be carnally minded is death,

but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Why should this be? The Vedanta holds that it is because the pure and divine soul of man becomes exiled from its home of eternal freedom and bliss when it drops into the state of embodied phenomenal existence. Creation implies limitation and thereby separation from God; and the doctrine of *Karma* clearly points out that there will be no end to this separation until all egoism is killed in the heart of the man seeking re-union with the Infinite. Egoism or the affirmation of the self tends to prolong the imprisonment of the soul in matter, while self-denial and the transcending of all worldly desires tends to free it from the fetters of embodied existence. Therefore has Jesus said: "He that will come after Me, let him deny himself."

Christianity and the *Bhakti* or devotional aspect of Vedanta understand this denial of egoism to consist in the complete subordination of the human will to the will of the all-loving God. Says a Christian writer in *Lux Mundi:* "Sin is felt to be alienation from God, who is the source of life and strength and peace; and in consequence of that alienation the whole nature is weakened and corrupted. In this aspect, sin is a state in which the will is separated from the Divine Will, the life is cut off from the life of God which He designed us to share. When men come to realize what is meant by union with God, and to feel the awful consequences of separation, there arises at once the longing for a return, a reconciliation." It is plain at a glance that this is a clear statement of the idea of sin or imperfection as we find it in the Vedic teaching. To be born in the phenomenal world of time, space, and causation is to be alienated from God, Vedanta declares, and reunion is possible only when the human soul is enabled to transcend the limitations of time, space and causation, to which it is subjected

on account of its association with the flesh and the world of phenomena.

Vedanta does not believe in the doctrine of original sin. It claims that all souls are by nature sinless and pure. To make the soul sinful would seem equivalent to making God, the source of all souls, sinful also. Yet the Biblical story of Adam and Eve is not without a meaning to the follower of Vedanta, but he interprets it in this way. Before Adam ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he was one with God; that is, he was not conscious of duality, of the distinction between subject and object, the ego and the non-ego, on which all phenomenal knowledge depends. His expulsion from paradise symbolizes the passage of the soul from the free noumenal condition of existence to the phenomenal condition. Driven out into the world of matter, every soul becomes subject to the promptings of the flesh and soon accumulates a heavy burden of Karma. It is thus that sin arises and the soul is forced to seek its justification by faith rather than by the law; or, to use the language of Vedanta, sin is born of ignorance, the ignorance which confounds the phenomenal with the noumenal; and this ignorance can be cured only by knowledge of the law.

Ignorance is bondage; knowledge is freedom, freedom from sin or ignorance. "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free." But this freedom is not a further step beyond knowledge, reached through it; it is the instantaneous result of it. The Christian's misapprehension of the exact philosophic meaning of the fall of Adam makes him question and wonder, when Vedanta says that the true knower of *Brahman* or the Absolute is incapable of being tainted by sin. To know God and to yield to the promptings of the flesh are utterly incompatible with

each other; therefore the truly spiritual man cannot sin. The glory of the soul is in its sinlessness, and the glory of human life is in the opportunities that it gives to man to realize this sinless glory of the soul and thus be re-united with God.

THE JOY OF THE LORD.

Bengalee Hymn.

Be filled with Joy and Gladness and say on the Sweet Name of the Lord!

At His Name shall rise a flood out of the sea of Nectar (Immortality); of this you may drink without ceasing.

The Thunder of His name shall snap the fetters of sin by which you are bound.

Come, let us be drunk with the joy of the Lord and thus quench forever the thirst of our hearts.

THE PROPHET OF ALLAH.

By Ananda.

Every prophet is the product of his age. He comes to meet the need of a special time and people and can only be rightly judged in relation to these. Preëminently is this the case with Mohammed. He was an Arab among Arabs. The Arabs were a people of strong, passionate nature, with the innate tribal feeling common to all Semitics, which despite their monotheistic belief has always made it impossible for them to conceive of a God who could love all men equally. Internal feuds, drunkenness, polygamy, idolatry had so weakened and degraded them at that period that already the thoughtful among them were seeking earnestly for some regenerating force to rouse once more the noble traits of the race, when in 570 A. D., at Mecca, Mohammed was born. He belonged to the family of Hashem, a collateral branch of the powerful Koreish tribe. His father, a poor merchant,

died before his birth; and his mother, a woman of rare merit, six years later. His grandfather then took him and bestowed on him most tender care, but he was already an old man, in his hundredth year, and before long he too passed away leaving the orphan to the charge of an uncle, Abu Thaleb, now head of the family.

Abu Thaleb was a merchant and more than once the boy as he grew older accompanied his uncle on trading journeys into Syria. We even read of him in his eighteenth year following his uncle into battle. It is probable that Abu Thaleb gave to Mohammed what education he could, but there was little schooling in it. It was rather the training of the desert, of cosmopolitan Syrian market-places, of contact with men and things, to which was added the mellowing influence of grief. Suffering is a great builder of character, and there can be little doubt that Mohammed lived through many hours of sadness. The loss of those dearest to him sank deep into his heart and the depravity which he saw every where about him drove him back more and more upon himself. Nourished and developed by his own thoughts, left alone with nature, especially during the long days when he tended flocks on the pasture slopes about Mecca, he began early to ponder on the deeper problems of life. It was the Arab custom to spend the month of Ramadhan in silence and solitude, and we can imagine how eagerly the young Mohammed layed aside his worldly tasks at the holy season and retired to the stillness of some mountain cave. All great men are made in the cave. Only out of the silent depths of contemplation rise the mighty thoughts and deeds of the world; and Mohammed, born the deliverer of the Arabs, could not prepare himself for the higher call without an occasional escape at least from the daily round of toil for bread.

At the age of twenty-six there came a sudden change in his fortunes. He was engaged to travel once more into Syria, this time as the steward of a rich widow, Khadija, of the same tribe as his own family. The prudence and intelligence with which he discharged his duties awakened first her gratitude, then a stronger feeling, and although fifteen years his senior she offered him her hand and became his wife. Of this union were born two sons and four daughters, but both the sons died early. Although Mohammed still continued his merchant's trade, more and more did he spend his time in lonely contemplation. Solitude now became a passion with him. Days and nights he passed along the streets of Mecca utterly unconscious of the scenes around him; yet never did a cry for help go unheard or the calls of little children to whom he was a special friend. A great storm seemed to be gathering in his soul. His hold on the outer world was slackening, and within was growing louder a voice, as yet vague, yet sounding somewhere down in the abyss of his inner consciousness and seeming to say: "Thou art the man. Thou art the chosen prophet of the Lord."

It was in his fortieth year during the month of Ramadhan that the first revelation came. He had retired to a cave on Mount Hira near Mecca for the usual season of prayer and meditation. While he sat alone, despondent almost to the point of self-destruction because he found nothing to slake the thirst for God-knowledge which burned within him, at the very moment when he thought to rend the outer flesh, the soul within began to shine and a mighty Voice called to him "Preach." He heard it twice in quietness, then an answer was wrung out of his heart. "What shall I preach?" "Preach in the name of the Lord," spoke the Voice. Frightened by the Angelic presence, he fell into unconsciousness and while lying in this state, the rec-

ords say, he read the mystery of the universe from the Book. It is a Mohammedan belief that the Book (Koran) lives in essence eternally with God and is now and then opened to a truth-seeking soul. Mohammed woke from his trance a Prophet, a Seer. From this moment he lived a pure and selfless life, a life of complete non-attachment. His whole character changed and had a Divine touch upon it. He began preaching and working, but he remained free from every taint of worldliness. The fruit of his works he left to God. So simple was he indeed in all his habits that even when moving at the head of big battalions, with rulers obeying him, he was often seen mending his own worn shoes and garments, while his only nourishment was dates, water and milk. Charity to all beings in word, thought and deed was his constant teaching. "Do a kindness, if it be only to a dog," is one of his sayings. Animals were as dear to him as men. Once a man brought to him two young birds robbed from a nest. The Prophet ordered him to put them down and at once the mother bird flew to her young. "Verily God is more loving to his servants than the mother to these young birds," he said. "Return them to the place from which you took them. Fear God with regard to animals. Verily there are rewards for doing good to dumb animals. There is no beast on earth, nor bird which flieth, but the same is like unto you. Unto the Lord shall they return."

The man of Vision is at the same time a breaker and a builder. While he deals heavy blows at old forms and systems, he is all along proclaiming, "I come not to destroy but to fulfill." How can this be? Because he knows that the old is the parent of the new; that when the hardened crust of superstition and corruption is struck off, the same Unchanging Eternal Truth will stand once more revealed.

Mohammed was a relentless iconoclast and reformer. His denunciation of the idolatry and depravity of his age was scathing, and it fell on the ears of his people like a thunderbolt. The Arabs were a fierce race and fiercely did Mohammed deliver his message. Nature in her most terrible aspects had revealed herself to him. He had seen behind the veil of *Maya* and discovered the illusive, fleeting character of the world. The deadly fruits of a life in the senses were to this Seer a reality. "This solid-seeming world is but a shadow, a non-reality to him who lives always in the presence of the One Great Existence." "Mountains, those great rocky mountains, they shall melt as do clouds in the sky. Know ye that the world's life is a cheat!" Such was the tenor of his preaching.

Mohammed's message savors rather of the terrors of death and eternal punishment than of the serene joys of the spiritual life; but the history of religions teaches us that a religion of fear seems better adapted to a sensual race than the religion of love. Yet the Koran emphatically admonishes: "Love those that hate, give to those that steal"; while Mohammed himself taught by example that faith and mercy can sometimes conquer there where the sword may fail. Once while he was sleeping alone at the foot of a tree, he was awakened by a sound and beheld Durthur, a hostile warrior, standing over him with drawn sword. "Mohammed, who is there now to save thee?" he cried. "God," replied the Prophet with unwavering trust. The wild Bedouin, suddenly awed, dropped his sword, which Mohammed seized. Raising the weapon he asked: "Who is there now to save thee, O Durthur?" "Alas, no one," answered the soldier. "Then learn of me to be merciful," said Mohammed, giving back the sword.

For three years the Prophet labored silently to redeem

his people, but he gained scarcely a convert. At last he determined to appeal publicly to his own Koreish tribe. Calling a meeting on the hillside of Sofa, he proclaimed his mission and asked who would join him. Only one arose, a lad of sixteen, Ali, the young son of Abu Thaleb. None other responded and there in that laughing, scoffing assembly stood this half-grown boy and the man of forty, alone, with the task of conquering Arabia in their hands. From this moment Mohammed was persecuted, abused, villified, yet always some friends he had even among the unbelievers. One Yathrebite chief advised the Koreish to give a hearing to the new preacher. "An honorable man has adopted a new religion," he said, "why persecute him? It is the Lord of the heavens who can read man's heart." For a time his uncle's power and influence protected him, but soon he and the faithful Khadija were gone and the organized persecution then set on foot drove him out of Mecca. He escaped to Medina in 622 A. D. and from this date begins the Moslem era of Hegira. But this apparent defeat only served to hasten his success. Opposition is the best promoter of a good cause. It popularizes the movement, stimulates thought about it, creates a struggle which makes for progress. It filters the dross from the message and purifies and strengthens the giver of it. Thus the flight from Mecca marked the beginning of triumphs for the discarded Prophet.

Mohammed, however, was not merely a preacher, he was also a great social organizer. One of his first attempts after reaching Medina was to establish a commonwealth on broad lines, in which Jew, Christian and Sabian should have a part, with perfect liberty of faith for each. "Surely those who believe, whether Jews, Christians or Sabians, who believe in God and the last day and do that which is right, they shall have their reward with the Lord, no

fear shall come upon them, neither shall they be grieved," were his words. The Jews, however, by their treacherous dealings, became a stumbling-block in the way, so he drove them out and created a strong homogeneous body of his own disciples, not forgetting a little later to grant a charter to the Christians which secured to them many privileges and immunities. That Mohammed carried his propaganda by the sword—this alone and most unjustly characterizes his mission for the non-Moslem world, while the great moral and intellectual uplift he brought to Arabia is forgotten. Carlyle's comment is: "The sword indeed; but where will you get your sword? Every new opinion, at its starting, is precisely a *minority of one.* One man alone of the whole world believes it; there is one man against all men. That he take a sword, and try to propagate with that, will do little for him. You must first get your sword! On the whole, a thing will propagate itself as it can. We do not find of the Christian Religion either, that it always disdained the sword, when once it had got one. Charlemagne's conversion of the Saxons was not by preaching. I care little about the sword: I will allow a thing to struggle for itself in this world with any sword or tongue or implement it has, or can lay hold of . . . very sure that it will, in the long run, conquer nothing which does not deserve to be conquered. What is better than itself it cannot put away, but only what is worse. In this great Duel, Nature herself is umpire, and can do no wrong; the thing which is deepest rooted in Nature, what we call *truest*, that thing and not the other will be found growing at last."

While some passages of the Koran undoubtedly recommend religious warfare against infidels, yet others as plainly enjoin gentleness and tolerance. "Let there be no forcing in religion," one reads. "If the Lord had pleased, all who

are on the earth would have believed together. And wilt thou force men to be believers?" And again: "Let there be no compulsion in religion. What will you force a man to when all religion comes from God? He heareth, He knoweth. Aim at self-rectification and do not go on judging others, for they will all return to God who judges all." When he sent forth missionaries, he admonished them thus: "Deal gently with the people, cheer them and be not harsh and condemn them. If people question thee what is the key to heaven, say, to testify to the truth of God and to do good works." One who could speak such words could never have given the answer of the Kaliph Omar to the learned men who came pleading for the vast library at Alexandria. "If those books," he replied, "contain anything which is contrary to the Koran they deserve to be destroyed. If they contain what is written in the Koran, they are unneccessary." And he ordered them to be distributed among the baths of the city to serve as fuel for their furnaces. Whatever may be one's feeling about the methods employed by Mohammed, no one can doubt their efficacy in spreading the new faith; for under its reanimating, liberating influence the Arabs built in eighty years an empire which it took more nearly eight hundred for the Romans to build. Science, philosophy, literature, mathematics, architecture, all attained a remarkable development; and the Arab through the gateway of Moorish Spain as well as by other channels became the bearer of rich gifts from the East to the civilization of the West.

The faith of the Koran is called *Islam*, which means complete submission to the will of God. "The thing that He sends, were it even worse than death, shall be the best. Whoso setteth his face towards God with a perfect self-surrender is a doer of that which is good and hath indeed

laid hold on the surest handle." That this idea of absolute resignation to the Divine Will has often led to an attitude of fatalism among the followers of the Prophet cannot be denied; but the broadest interpreters of the Koran claim that it plainly teaches that man himself is the maker of his own destiny and will be judged by his own works. To feed the poor and orphaned even though we ourselves go hungry, asking neither for recompense nor thanks; to worship God with humility and tenderness and in a spirit devoid of all calculation; neither to covet nor to judge nor to make a vain show of piety—such are the ethical admonitions of the Koran, which is unmistakably Judaic in its spirit. The teachings of Mohammed indeed may best be defined as a commingling of Judaism and Christianity, with a something else added by the Prophet's own powerful personality and Vision which especially adapted it to the people of Arabia. Mohammed himself practically proclaims this when, in naming the great prophets of God, he declares Moses, Jesus and himself to be the greatest. Islam came as a mighty social force, liberating the low and the weak, purging society of its many corruptions, calling men away from idolatry to a purer form of worship; but its work was more that of a moral judge than of a spiritual renewer. Only in the later form of Sufiism, which sprang up in Persia early in the ninth century and which is generally admitted to be the result of the influence of Indian thought, do we find it reaching a subtler spiritual expression.

Every great Teacher who comes to earth as a mighty transformer of men, be he Saviour or Prophet, brings a lesson for all mankind. His Message may be spoken in an alien tongue and for a special people, but he himself is a Divine Revelation through which flashes anew the Truth of God. The "inspiration of the Almighty giveth him under-

standing," and those who hear him with open heart and unprejudiced mind cannot fail to gain new understanding from him.

REPORT.

Swami Paramananda is still in the West. The six weeks which he has spent so far in Los Angeles have proved full of tireless activity for him. Besides his own regular meetings he has given a Course of morning Talks at the Metaphysical Library on Self-Control, Concentration and Meditation, delivered addresses at the Buddhist Monastery and at a Benefit Concert for the Japanese sick and given a special lecture in the drawing-room of a judge in Los Angeles, to which a number of thoughtful people were invited. This was a particularly gratifying occasion because of the deep appreciation manifested for the teaching. Besides these calls upon his time, the Swami has been forced to devote a number of hours each day to interviews. The attendance at his regular Sunday evening lectures has been most encouraging, never falling below 200 and sometimes exceeding 300, while the average attendance at the Tuesday Class Lecture has been over 80. For the regular students the Swami has also held a Meditation Class on Thursday at which 30 or more have always been present. We give these figures as the most direct way of showing how wide-spread is the interest in Vedanta there. It is not known when the Swami will return, as every effort is being made to keep him in Los Angeles and he has received an urgent invitation to give a Course of Lectures and Class Talks in San Diego; he has also been asked to lecture in Seattle.

At the Vedanta Centre of Boston the work throughout July continued as usual, Sister Devamata conducting the services and classes. The two Sunday Services and the Tuesday Evening Class will still continue, but the Thursday Class will now be suspended until the autumn.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES."—Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

The Message of the East

UNIVERSITY OF

SEPTEMBER 1916

Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE

1 Queensberry St., Boston, Mass. U. S. A.

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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FAITH, BELIEF AND REASON
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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

VOL. V. SEPTEMBER, 1916. No. 9.

THE NEED OF DISCRIMINATION.

By Swami Paramananda.

Wisdom is the final goal of mankind. There is scarcely a living being who has not a desire to know. Whenever anything is hidden from us, our curiosity is aroused and we try to penetrate the veil that hides it. We never like to be left in the dark. This desire to know is an inherent tendency in every human mind. Impelled by it we are all striving, but we do not understand how to strive wisely. Often we work very hard to gain some end; then after we have gained it, we find that our aim was not properly directed. What we have attained does not satisfy the desire of our heart and we suffer from disappointment or regret. We need a pathfinder, some light to guide us, to show us the way, to help us to distinguish Truth from untruth, Real from unreal. Discrimination is that light. It is the means and wisdom is the end. Any one who tries to gain wisdom without using this means, never succeeds; for unless his energy is properly placed, it will be wasted. Every soul then must awaken within him the faculty of discrimination. The ordinary tendency of man is to go to the external for help and guidance. Very rarely do we find one who tries to go within and see if there is not something placed there by the hands of the Almighty to help him. Yet until

a man ceases to reach outward and looks within himself, he does not begin to grow in wisdom; for the discriminative faculty, though inherent in every living being, does not become awakened until we turn our eyes within.

The Sages declare that each man has Divinity within him. He is potentially perfect. All the wisdom he is seeking is within himself; he has simply to discover or uncover it. What we call gaining knowledge is nothing but tearing off a veil from our mind. But we cannot do this accidentally. We must take some systematic method and for this we need strength. Instead of dwelling on our weakness, we must try to find within us something stable, something reliable, something more powerful than this ordinary nature of ours. An intelligent man begins to question: Can I depend on my hands? Can I depend on my muscles? Can I depend on my mind? Can I depend on my external surroundings for my happiness? As he thus analyzes, he finds that all these things are fleeting. Today they smile upon him, tomorrow they vanish without warning; so gradually he learns to put aside the things which are non-essential because he knows that they merely veil his true Vision.

This is called the process of discrimination. Just as we enter a dark room, perhaps carrying in our hand a little lamp, and we go from one corner to another saying, "Not this, not this," until we find that for which we are looking; so with the light of discrimination we move through the world leaving behind one thing after another until we find the object of our search. No one of us can live here satisfactorily and fulfill his mission as a human being without developing his discriminative faculty. It serves as a lantern in our hand helping us to find our way. When discouragement or depression overtakes us, it comes to our aid by telling us that the conditions of this ephemeral world cannot

last forever; that the feelings of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, come and go; so recognizing their transitory nature, we stand firm and work on steadily, with our mind fixed on the ultimate goal of wisdom.

And what is wisdom? It is for finite man to realize his Infinite nature, for every individual soul to realize his oneness with the Supreme. It means to tear down the barrier which separates us from the Source of our being and makes us feel helpless, powerless, fearful of death. All such feelings vanish when we come face to face with the Divine. It is absurd for an ordinary man to say "I am God" or "I am one with God"; for as a man of form his consciousness is limited and he knows himself only as a separate being. He must first find out what is God and what is not God, what is apparent and what is real. He must begin by studying his external nature. He must reason: Is my body lasting? No. My mind also is not stable. Therefore that Divine Self which is Eternal, Immortal, part of God, cannot be limited to the body or mind. I still exist if the body goes to pieces, so I must be something different; why then should I limit myself to it and suffer with it? I am not the body, I am not the senses. These things only exist relatively, but I am that which is unchanging, undying; that which fire cannot burn, air cannot dry, water cannot wet, sword cannot pierce. I am that Immortal Self.

So taking the process of "Not this, not this," he seeks deeper and deeper within himself. Dropping the limited ego, which identifies itself with the body and all perishable conditions, he begins to unfold his higher, more universal nature. Instead of remaining centered in his physical being, having love merely for his own little body, clinging to his own little self, seeking to gratify his own little desires, he begins to cover a larger circle. As he discriminates and

reasons, the little man expands and expands until he breaks through all the barriers of the flesh. He severs himself from the limiting ties of self-consciousness and gradually merges himself in the Cosmic Ego—not losing himself, but finding himself in greater things. Thus does his circle widen and widen until finally he realizes his oneness—not with the body, not with this mind, not with the little things of this world, but with God. Then he is able to declare truthfully: "There is but One without a Second. All is God."

This is what is called true wisdom. As long as we do not strive for that wisdom, we live in a narrow circle and remain bound to perishable things. We talk of universality, of universal ideals, universal brotherhood, but how are these things possible for man until he has broken down all barriers and has come in contact with that Mighty Power which sustains the universe? As we take up the practice of discrimination, however, and find out the unreality of this phenomenal world, we must have the courage to detach ourselves from it. When we discover the nature of our Soul, we must learn to love the Soul more than the body. As we come to know the God within us, we must be willing to follow the bidding of that Divine Self rather than the voice of the little ego. This requires great determination. A man of wavering will cannot go far on this path. We must be strong—not in mere physical strength, but in true strength, the strength that comes from knowledge of our Divine nature.

The path of wisdom teaches us to loosen our hold on that which is unreal, non-essential, and to cling to that which is vital. Then as we learn to follow the vital part of our being without paying heed to our lower nature, we begin to grow in spiritual power and in understanding. The

Bhagavad-Gita tells us that however ignorant or sinful we may be, by the bark of wisdom we shall cross over the whole ocean of sin. As fire reduces fuel to ashes, similarly does the fire of wisdom reduce all imperfections to ashes. Nothing indeed purifies like wisdom and this wisdom we must seek with reverence and devotion, rendering humble service that we may make ourselves worthy to receive it. Having gained it, we shall be freed from error or false perception and shall not again fall into delusion regarding the Real and apparent, the Self and the not-Self. But he alone attains it who is full of faith, who has subdued his lower nature and who is possessed with sincere longing for it. One who is devoid of faith or of doubting mind cannot hope to gain it. It comes only to him who has cut asunder all his doubts by the sharp sword of discrimination and is wholly governed by his Higher Self. That one alone attains wisdom and enjoys Eternal Peace.

These (earthly plans and desires) are realities to us so long as we do not see God. But once placed face to face with the Vision Divine, we see them as they are,—transitory things, no better than dreams; and then we pray for more Light, more Knowledge in the highest sense, more Divine Love, the Love that lifts us from manhood to Godhood, a Love which makes us realize that we are really sons of the Supreme Being, of Whom all that can be said is that He exists, that He is Knowledge itself, and that He is the eternal Fountain of Love and Bliss. Therefore never lose sight of this Goal of life. Never lose sight of the Ideal. He alone is a real man who is illumined by the light of true knowledge; others are men but in name.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

THE INFINITE IS BLISS.

Selection from the Chandogya-Upanishad.

He is a real *Ativadin* who declares the Highest Being to be the True. But we must desire to know the True.

Sir, I desire to know the True.

When one understands the True, then one declares the True. One who does not understand it, does not declare the True. Only he who understands it, declares the True. This understanding, however, we must desire to understand.

Sir, I desire to understand it.

When one perceives, then one understands. One who does not perceive, does not understand. Only he who perceives, understands. This perception, however, we must desire to understand.

Sir, I desire to understand it.

When one has faith, then one perceives. One who has not faith, does not perceive. Only he who has faith perceives. This faith, however, we must desire to understand.

Sir, I desire to understand it.

When one attends on a spiritual teacher (Guru), then one has faith. One who does not attend on a teacher, has not faith. Only he who attends, has faith. This attendance on the teacher, however, we must desire to understand.

Sir, I desire to understand it.

When one performs all one's religious duties (restraint of the senses, concentration, meditation, etc.), one attends on a teacher. One who does not perform his duties, does not really attend on a teacher. This performance of duties, however, we must desire to understand.

Sir, I desire to understand it.

When one obtains bliss (in himself) he performs his duties. One who does not obtain bliss, does not perform duties. Only he who obtains bliss performs duties. This

bliss, however, we must desire to understand.

Sir, I desire to understand it.

The Infinite is bliss. There is no bliss in anything finite. Infinity alone is bliss. This Infinity, however, we must desire to understand.

Sir, I desire to understand it.

Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else, that is the Infinite. Where one sees something else, hears something else, understands something else, that is the finite. The Infinite is immortal, the finite is mortal.

Sir, in what does the Infinite rest?

In its own greatness—or not even in greatness. In the world they call cows and horses, elephants and gold, slaves, wives, fields and houses greatness. I do not mean this, for in that case one thing rests upon another (but the Infinite cannot rest in something different from Itself). The Infinite alone is below, above, behind, before, to the right and to the left. It is indeed all this. . . . He who sees, perceives, and understands this loves the Self (Supreme Spirit), delights in the Self, revels in the Self, rejoices in the Self. He becomes a self-ruler, he is lord and master in all the worlds. But those who think otherwise live in perishable worlds and are ruled by others.

That Self is a boundary, so that these worlds may not be confounded. Day and night do not pass that, nor old age, death and grief; neither good nor evil deeds. All evil-doers turn back from it, for the world of Brahman (Absolute Truth) is free from all evil. Therefore he who has crossed that boundary, if blind, ceases to be blind; if wounded, ceases to be wounded; if afflicted, ceases to be afflicted. When that boundary has been crossed, night becomes day indeed, for the world of Brahman is lighted up once for all.

PSYCHIC POWER AND SPIRITUAL VISION.

Lecture by Sister Devamata.

Man is not a homogeneous entity. He is a composite of many layers of being. In the final analysis, however, his constitution may be reduced to a duality consisting of matter and spirit. But this does not imply a corresponding division into visible and invisible. We must not commit the error of inferring that whatever lies beyond the reach of the senses falls in the realm of spirit. There are many strata in the finer part of man's organism which although entirely invisible are yet absolutely material, as material in fact as the ultra-violet rays which are imperceptible to the human eye. The first and most obvious in these coverings of matter is the gross body, a self-renewing dress which man wears, not for a season merely, but for a lifetime. Beyond that are his five external senses, made up of the outer instruments (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, tactile nerves) and the inner registering organs. Next to these comes the sixth sense, the mind or *Manas,* from the same root as the English word "man." Beyond mind is the intellect or *Buddhi,* comprising the discriminative faculty and reason; and still further behind lies the *Ahamkara* or sense of "I."

When a vibration strikes on one of the sense instruments, it passes back to the corresponding organ and is registered as a sensation; the mind whose function is that of messenger only, carries it to the discriminative faculty; this, after analyzing and determining its character, whether hostile or beneficent, presents it to the ego; the ego in turn lays it before the real self, that central power who is the final judge of all experience. Conjoined with the ego is the moral sense, the last and subtlest form of material manifestation, for even the loftiest height of ethics lies within the confines of matter. The whole of human manifestation indeed is only

an ascending scale of material vibration, steadily increasing in rapidity and intensity until it transcends all ordinary idea of motion.

As inconceivable as this may be, a little thought will make it evident. Morality implies diversity, otherwise there could be no choice and on choice it rests; diversity presupposes form; and form however subtle necessitates matter. But, you may say, the objects on which the moral sense acts may be material, yet the ethical faculty itself is surely immaterial. That is impossible and contrary to the law of nature as we see it. The faculty always belongs to the plane on which it functions and is of similar constitution; otherwise there could be no point of contact between the object and the perceptive organ. The gross objects of the external universe are perceived by the gross senses; intellect is of the same fine substance as the thought forms with which it deals; while ego and the moral sense represent the same substance and energy in a still higher state of vibration, the reactions of which manifest themselves as emotions and ethical impulses. The quicker the vibration, the subtler the perception and the higher the nature of the activity; the grosser the vibration, the more dense and physical the experience or act. Thought vibration is incalculably swifter than light vibrations, and there is no instrument to measure the swiftness of the vibration manifested in a noble moral impulse.

Thus have we reached the boundary line of man's nature as we know it, yet we have not even touched the real man—that formless Spirit out of which rise all these forms called body, mind and ego; that Unchanging Self over which these changes of thought and sensations play like shadows; that Invisible by the light of which all human activities become visible; the hidden Life-Force which animates and propels

the living man. Now in this ascending scale of human manifestation where lies the so-called psychic area, that curious region which so easily entices and entangles man? It begins just above the gross senses and passes into the *Manas* or lower mind. From this we can see at once how material are the psychic powers and how inadequate and untrustworthy therefore as instruments for higher research.

There are three states of consciousness recognized by all,—the waking state, the dream state and the sound sleep state. The ordinary man calls himself awake when he consciously directs his activities and identifies himself with a definite environment. Then he falls asleep. At once his body and bodily association vanish and he enters into a finer state of consciousness, a purely mental state known as dream. Here his thought, freed from the restraining limitations of dense matter, moves with a startling ease and swiftness, performing feats abnormal to the waking man. Then all dream activity drops below the horizon and sound sleep comes. The psychic state, to use the term in its common application, corresponds to this dream state. It lies in that middle region where the strata of consciousness ordinarily manifesting as waking and sound sleep meet and mingle, creating a third condition which may best be defined as a twilight consciousness. This remains true even when, as we advance in understanding, we reverse our ideas of what sound sleep and waking are. To the spiritually enlightened, indeed, the state of alert physical consciousness which the sense-bound man calls waking, appears a sleep; while that state where man draws inward to touch his Source, thereby gaining new life and refreshment, is more really a waking, even though, until he learns to do it consciously through meditation, it may seem a sleep.

As every one has power to dream, so has he access to the

psychic realm. It becomes evident then that these powers, which are so greedily coveted by many, do not represent any exceptional gift or superior attainment. Nor have they any more value than man's external senses. The world of psychic phenomena is in reality only a subtilized sense world. If we know some one who can tell the hour by the town clock ten blocks away while it is still invisible to us, do we regard him as a more highly developed being? We merely recognize that he has a longer range of vision. So is it with one who can see something happening in another town or country or on another plane. The same may be said of clairaudience and all psychic manifestations. Hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, remain the same however wide the area they cover. They never cease to be sense activities and in the sum-total of experience can count merely as human incidents along the way.

The possession of powers does not increase a man's value, it is the use he makes of them which determines that. But we have not yet learned to use our ordinary senses wisely, constantly do they entrap and betray us. That is why every Spiritual Teacher and Scripture so earnestly warns mankind to guard against the snare of the senses. In themselves they are not wrong. God did not give us a single power which was not meant to serve us. Their danger lies in our ignorance regarding their place and function. The intelligent man therefore is less concerned to acquire powers than to gain wisdom. He does not wish to multiply his difficulties by extending his sense territory. Already the struggle is great enough in conquering his gross physical senses, why double it by rousing a new set, which being finer are even more dangerous, just as a finely pointed blade is more dangerous in a child's hand than a stick. Psychic power is one of the readiest weapons at the command of the

ego, because it fosters vanity, satisfies idle curiosity about the unseen, and produces phenomena which so cleverly counterfeit the spiritual as to delude even the thoughtful. Yet, when properly understood, it is not necessarily harmful, for the visions which sometimes come to the sincere-hearted along the way may serve to strengthen their faith and stimulate their desire to seek still higher things.

Ability to communicate with the departed, that most seductive form of psychic manifestation, also has its use in so far as it helps to demonstrate continuance of life after bodily death; but for the individual it can be no more wholesome or beneficial than promiscuous association with souls in the body. To be rushing here and there asking advice is always a sign of weakness. The strong man stays at home and seeks counsel of his soul. Why should it be any more justifiable to run to the disembodied for help? A man is no wiser for having dropped his body. His character and mind remain unchanged. He has merely put off an outer covering and is in the same mental state as when here in this life, through intense concentration on a task or a book, he loses consciousness for a time of his body. If he was not an infallible guide then, he will not be now. It is also great selfishness to be constantly calling upon those on the other side, treating them like errand boys or girls with no independent life of their own. They are busy; they have as much to do as we; why should we interrupt them at our pleasure? The very fact of their leaving the earthly environment and associations in which we knew them, shows that they had finished with it and that their further development required some other condition. Should we hold them here for our consolation or satisfaction? In rare cases such communication may be carried on with benefit to both embodied and disembodied; but it is too rare to count

upon, and it is a better rule to attach less value to intercourse with human beings, in or out of the flesh, and to learn the joy and strength of intercourse with God.

The same may be said of all psychic practices on this plane. They are in most cases a form of indiscretion and meddling. Would we read the letters of other people? What more right have we to read their minds? Would we eaves-drop at their doors? Then why be proud that we have heard their conversation from a distant point? Let us not be content with such trifling manifestations of power. Let us no longer idle away our time in this realm of the near-invisible, dreaming dreams. Rather let us push on, saying: "If these little visions can so charm us, what must be the Ultimate Vision?" So long as we remain under the spell of these subtler sense powers we cannot go forward. We are like jugglers performing tricks on the market-place for the bewonderment of the crowd. Have we no larger ambition, no wider stretch of aspiration? We are children of the Infinite, what can this petty play of finite forces mean to us? It is true that these physic experiences often seem to come of themselves without any apparent effort or desire on our part. If they come, it is because we give them access. Far down beneath the surface we are clinging to them. The moment we belittle them, instead of inflating their importance, they will begin to fade and vanish. This does not mean that we shall lose the subtle faculties which make them possible. They will merely sink into a dormant state like any unused organ, ready to wake when the whole man springs into new life under the quickening touch of Spirit.

In the night every object of a landscape is present, but forms and perspective are confused and out of scale. When the sun rises, each takes its proper place and discloses its own nature. So will it be with us when that first flash of

spiritual illumination lights up our present obscurity. At once we shall perceive the purpose and value of every part of this human mechanism, and shall be able to use the whole freely without danger to ourselves or to others. Not one of us is wanting in any element necessary to ultimate attainment. Every being is equally equipped for the spiritual life. What is lacking is sufficient light to work by. Just as a fully equipped factory is useless without proper illumination, so is man. The feebler lights of mind and reason do not penetrate to the farthest recesses of his consciousness; and seeing only a portion of himself, necessarily he falsifies his values and is deluded.

All departments of knowledge suffer because of this partial vision. Things seen through a glass darkly can never prove permanent contributions to science. That is the reason why all our modern sciences are so shifting and hypothetical. Yet in every individual there is an unerring perception, a Divine Vision, which is whole and complete. Can we doubt for a moment then what our first duty is? Must it not be to unfold that innermost faculty by which we may apprehend Truth directly? The scientific investigator who is satisfied with lesser instruments cannot hope to reach any sure conclusion. Although he may collect many well-authenticated facts, he will be unable to classify them on any ultimate basis; and science does not consist in merely accumulating facts, but in being able to so group and relate them as to gain a profounder insight into cosmic law. No accurate generalization, however, can be made apart from knowledge of the Final Cause and that can be attained through Spiritual Vision alone.

The great question then becomes: How can we acquire this higher power of sight? The first condition is intense desire. All our outer senses were evolved through a per-

sisting desire to pierce channels of communication with this objective world. The same steadfast longing to penetrate to the subjective or causal realm will develop the inner vision—the "third eye" spoken of in Vedic Sacred Literature. As those primitive forms of life grew aware of a universe of matter all about them and struggled to perceive it, so we must begin to realize that at this moment we are living in a mighty universe of Spirit to which we are blind and deaf. We sense it dimly, as did the jelly-fish its world, we must strive with unwavering will to know it. That which obscures our sight is matter; we must remove it layer by layer. Not, however, by any objective process. The work is wholly subjective. It consists in gradually altering our point of view. We begin by ceasing to identify ourselves with the body, no longer believing that our happiness depends on its comfort or convenience. All this intricate system of living, with its multiplicity of attachments, occupations and possessions, rests on the belief that we are one with the body. Rid ourselves of that and at once our life will grow free and simple. So long as we devote the larger part of our energy to caring and providing for it, we cannot hope to transcend its limitations. Yet we must not neglect it. As we keep our clothes clean and well-mended, so must we treat this closer garment; but having done that we should wear it unconsciously.

Next we must break the tyranny of the senses. We must free ourselves from the superstition that they are the surest channels of either happiness or knowledge. If it were not for the watchful censorship of the discriminative faculty, they would constantly deceive and man would never know. All they do is to admit raw material for observation; but only when their gateways are closed does the real process of knowing begin. The secrets of nature are hidden far down

below the surface where ears and eyes and fingers cannot reach. It requires the keen penetration of the superconscious faculties to discover them. Our eyes may tell us by a simple chemical analysis that salt is made up of Chlorine and Sodium, but only that deeper-seeing inner eye can disclose why two things which are poisons in themselves, when combined, should produce a stable element of food. "Carried to whatever extent," Herbert Spencer truly says, "the inquiries of the psychologist do not reveal the ultimate nature of mind, any more than do the inquiries of the chemist reveal the ultimate nature of matter, or those of the physicist the ultimate nature of motion."

The mind and intellect, too, must loose their hold upon us. We must no longer cling to the delusion that lasting satisfaction can be gained from book knowledge. Goethe draws a true picture of the emptiness of powers and learning, when he shows Faust on that Easter Eve turning from his books and magic to the cup of poison as the only remedy for life's bitterness. Our minds were meant to think with, not to serve as storage warehouses for other people's thoughts. So long as we crowd them full of miscellaneous information, we have no space left for our own use and we cannot gain the habit of independent thinking. Why should we take all our knowledge second hand? Why should we not learn to go to the source and gather it for ourselves? Study is good, but only as it brings us in contact with greater minds and stimulates us to reflection and original research.

Most of all the ego must be put off. Nothing so obscures or refracts our vision, nothing so neutralizes all our moral effort as egoism. Even the most exalted service is abortive if accompanied by the sense of "I." Mankind is not enriched by taking money or dress or food from one

place and putting it in another, that is, by giving of our superfluity to the needy. That which enriches it is a free gift of spirituality through an illumined selfless life. The relief work which we call charity is made necessary by the fierce war of "I and mine" perpetually raging in the world. Such charity is never corrective, it is only a fair amend for the evils created by ourselves. We talk loudly of educating the masses, while we ourselves remain ignorant of the fundamental verities of life. We have not the wisdom to solve our own problems, yet we rush in hotly to solve the problems of society. We recognize that there is a Higher Vision, but we are content to grope our way along in half-blindness, misleading ourselves and others. We believe that an Ultimate Truth exists, but the labor of attaining It is too great, so we spend our energies on lesser things. In what are we better than the man who, too lazy to earn money, wilfully circulates false coin?

The world needs light, the light of Spiritual Vision, to dispel the oppressive darkness of materialism which envelops it. Having failed with all our getting to get understanding, we find ourselves today surrounded by wealth, but in the direst poverty; overstocked with knowledge, yet profoundly ignorant. And if now we would soothe and help mankind in its travail, we have but one course to follow—to turn from things of the flesh to things of the Spirit, and by prayer and meditation, by earnest searching within and loving service without, to so purify our minds and hearts that we shall be able to perceive that Final Truth, which alone will provide a stable foundation for both life and knowledge.

To be able to discern that what is true is true, and that what is false is false, this is the mark and character of intelligence.—*Swedenborg.*

GOD-KNOWLEDGE.

From the Teachings of Chuang-Tzu.

I Liao of Shih-nan paid a visit to the prince of Lu. Finding the latter sad, he inquired the cause. The Prince replied: "I study the doctrines of the ancient Sages. I respect religion. I honor the Good. Never do I fail in all my duties; yet I cannot avoid misfortune, therefore am I sad."

"Your Highness' method of avoiding misfortune is but a shallow one," rejoined the Sage. "A handsome fox or a striped leopard seeks shelter in a mountain forest behind some rocky cliff; they creep out cautiously at night and hide away by day, but still they do not escape the net or trap. Yet what crime have they committed? It is their skin that causes all their trouble. The state of Lu is your Highness' skin. I would have your Highness put away body and skin alike, and cleansing your heart and purging it of passion, betake yourself to the land where mortality is not.

"There is in Nan-Yueh a district called Established-Virtue. Its people are honest, simple, unselfish, and free from passions. They make, but do not keep. They give, but look for no return. They work with diligence, but not impelled by any sense of obligation. They move with perfect independence, unconscious of the binding slavery of custom. Their actions are wholly unrestrained, yet they walk in the way of wisdom. Thither, Prince, would I have your Highness proceed, leaving behind you world and power, and trusting wholly in Tao (the Divine)."

"The road is long and full of danger," replied the Prince. "There are rivers and hills to cross and I am without boat or chariot."

"Unhindered by body and unfettered by mind," spoke the philosopher, "your Highness will be a chariot to yourself."

"But the road stretches in endless distance, dreary and uninhabited," protested the Prince. "There will be none to help me, none to give me food. How can I make the journey?"

"Decrease expenditure of energy and lessen desires," answered the philosopher. "Even though without provisions there will be enough. Across rivers and over seas Your Highness will travel into shoreless space. From the borderland those who act as escort will return; but onward and onward Your Highness will journey afar. It is the human in ourselves which is our hindrance, and the human in others which causes our sorrow. I would have Your Highness put off this hindrance and rid yourself of this sorrow and roam with Tao alone through the realms of Infinity.

"Suppose a boat is crossing a river and another empty boat floats against it. Even an irascible boatman would not grow angry. But let there be an occupant in the second boat and at once he will shout to him to keep clear. If he fails to heed him, loud words of abuse will surely follow. In the first case there was no anger, in the second there was. Why? Because in the first case the boat was empty, and in the second it was occupied. So with man. If he could only roam through life empty (of his ego), who would be able to disturb or injure him?"

Confucius said to Lao Tzu: "Today you are at leisure. Pray tell me of perfect Tao."

Lao Tzu answered: "Purge your heart by fasting and discipline. Wash your soul as white as snow. Cast aside your (partial) knowledge and I will try to tell you then of Tao. Those who enter into Tao become strong of limb, subtle of thought, clear of sight and hearing. They suffer no fatigue of mind, they meet with no bodily resistance.

But it is not from extensive study that this may be known, nor by dialectic skill that this may be made clear. Attainment implies non-discussion; discussion implies non-attainment. Hence silence is better than argument. Tao cannot be translated into speech, better then say nothing. This is called the great attainment."

And Chuang Tzu adds: Man's intellect, however keen, face to face with the countless evolutions of things, their birth and death, their squareness and roundness, can never reach the root. Always the secret of life is withheld. Even the autumn spikelet, in all its minuteness, must carry Tao within itself. Nothing perishes altogether. Apparently destroyed, yet really existing; the material gone, the immaterial left—such is the law of creation which passes all our understanding. This is called the root, whence a glimpse may be obtained of God.

Tao cannot be heard. Heard, it is not Tao. It cannot be seen. Seen, it is not Tao. It cannot be spoken. Spoken, it is not Tao. That which imparts form to forms is itself formless, therefore Tao cannot have a name. Unfathomable as the sea, wondrously ending only to begin again, informing all creation without being exhausted, such is Tao.

Is there not an absolute justice? And an absolute beauty and absolute good? But did you ever behold any of them with your eyes? Has the reality of them ever been perceived by you through the bodily organs? He attains to the knowledge of them in their highest purity who goes to each one of them with the mind alone, not allowing when in the act of thought the intrusion or introduction of sight or any other sense in the company of reason, but with the very light of mind in her clearness penetrates into the very light of truth in each; he has got rid, as far as he can, of

eyes and ears and of the whole body, which he conceives as a disturbing element, hindering the soul from the acquisition of knowledge when in company with her—is not this the sort of man who, if ever man did, is likely to attain the knowledge of being?—*Plato.*

FAITH, BELIEF AND REASON.

Faith and belief, although closely allied phenomena of the human mind, are not identical; nor is either opposed to reason. On the contrary, the three stand as consecutive steps in the same act of cognition. The first step is belief; the second, reason; the third, faith. Without belief reason cannot work, and reason and belief lead inevitably to faith. Belief underlies reason, faith rises out of it. No intelligent man admits as material for his reasoning faculty anything that has not an element of likelihood or an appearance of truth. He must believe in the possibility of his premises, just as a mathematician must believe in the correctness of his data before he will begin to solve a problem. It is upon such a foundation of belief that all scientific research rests. Close observation of nature led Charles Darwin to believe in the probable existence of a law of natural selection. Years of experimental study and generalization based on this hypothesis gradually led him to a firm faith in the law. But further he could not go, because although faith gives us "the evidence of things not seen," it does not enable us to see them. In order to apprehend the hidden truths of the universe we must have subtler powers of perception. Because the scientists of today do not recognize the existence of those latent powers and the possibilities of direct vision to be gained through them, they are forced to classify that entire sphere of Absolute Truth as unknowable, at the same time proving their faith in it by making it the basis of all

their processes of generalization.

The followers of Vedanta, while also recognizing the unknowableness of this hidden Reality for the ordinary intellect, will not give up their quest for It. The ultimate aim of all human effort indeed, in their view, is this Unknowable Reality. It is to be described as "No, No," and yet is to be sought after. The solemn declaration of the wise father to the enquiring son in the Upanishad: "That which is the subtle essence in all that exists has its self. It is the True, it is the Self and Thou, O Swetaketu, art That," has a ring of strong and deep conviction about it which shows that such questions regarding the Inscrutable were not for those ancient Indo-Aryans a vain fancy. Though in the flesh and bound down by it, though compelled to perceive and know things generally through the dim and small channels of the sense organs, they were yet able to obtain hold of a positive Reality on which to rest their faith.

Their soul's senses were possessed with "another sound, another vision"; and they were able to travel in spirit to the region of that Real and Unchangeable Being which is beyond time, space and causation and which has ever to be known as *Sat-Chit-Anandam* (Existence Absolute-Knowledge Absolute-Bliss Absolute). Knowledge of this Being they promise to all those who have *Shraddha* or faith—a faith which is not merely firm conviction regarding the existence of a Supreme Reality, but which contains that other essential element of unwavering confidence that It can be known. Reason, which deals only with the phenomenal elements of human experience, has no place or power here; the Reality behind all phenomena is not accessible to ordinary observation and inference. But that there is a sphere which transcends reason, even the worshippers of reason

are forced to admit. To the ancient Sages of India, this higher sphere of being is the vital subject "which we must desire to understand."

Shraddha or Faith is the name they give to the frame of mind of the true inquirer who is earnest in his search after the Unknown. It is that which carries man from the knowledge of phenomena to knowledge of that which supports them; or as it has been said, from nature to nature's God. And this faith rises in man in response to the deeper needs felt by him in those supreme moments of his life when he grows dimly conscious of kinship with a Power and Presence higher than himself and than all that he sees or knows on earth. Impelled and fortified by this faith, he dives deep into his heart to obtain a knowledge of this Reality which transcends all his experience; for "faith abides in the heart" and "by the heart faith knows," as the *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad* puts it. "I have found the organ," Fichte writes in his *Bestimmung des Menschen*, "by which to apprehend all reality. It is not the understanding; for all knowledge supposes some higher knowledge on which it rests, and of this ascent there is no end. It is Faith, voluntarily reposing on views naturally presenting themselves to us, *because* through these views alone we can fulfill our destiny; which sees our knowledge, and pronounces that it 'is good,' and raises it to certainty and conviction. It is not knowledge but a resolution of the will to admit this knowledge."

The reasoning of faith is not in all respects like the reasoning of science; nevertheless, it also leads to certitudes the value and truthfulness of which it is impossible to question, unless the mind and heart of the questioner have been wrongly educated. That none are so blind as those who will not see, is true in matters of both faith and reason.

Atheism and irreligion do not really flow so much from honest and enlightened reason as from an acquired and specially disciplined unwillingness of certain minds to yield freely to the natural promptings of that luminous and life-giving faith, which is in consonance with all the needs and aspirations of the higher life of man and which takes him step by step into the Illumining Presence of the Most High.

REPORTS.

Although Swami Paramananda had closed his course of lectures and classes in Los Angeles and was planning to leave for the North, such strong pressure was brought to bear upon him to remain and establish a Centre, that he finally yielded. A house remarkably well adapted for the work was found at 1071 South Hoover St., one of the pleasantest sections of the city, and the first Service was held there on Sunday morning, August 27th. The Classes have also been reopened and will meet on Wednesday and Friday evenings at 8. It is the Swami's intention to remain in Los Angeles at the new Centre until the end of October. He will then resume his work at the Boston Centre, placing some one else in charge in Los Angeles during his absence.

* * *

The Ramakrishna Mission is carrying on its Famine Relief Work with unabated energy. To check the ravages caused by thirst as well as hunger, it has excavated eight fair-sized ponds and constructed a canal one mile in length and 25 feet broad. It has also opened a new Centre at Khatra. This brings the area covered by its work in Bankura District alone to 125 square miles; while the number of villages receiving regular or intermittent help amounted to 866 in three weeks. Fierce fires caused by the intense heat added much to their labors, as members of the Mission worked with the people in rebuilding their homes.

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

VOL. V. OCTOBER, 1916. No. 10

THE DEVOTEE OF GOD.

Familiar Teachings by Swami Ramakrishnananda.

Why should we worship God? Why should we be devoted to Him? Because only by one-pointed love for Him can we realize all that we desire to realize; and if we worship Him with steadfast devotion, we shall gradually come to love Him. Our Master, Sri Ramakrishna, used to tell us the story of some fisherwomen who, being overtaken by a storm on their way home from market, took refuge with a florist. He put them in a room where he kept flowers for his customers and the air was full of fragrance. The fisherwomen tried vainly to sleep, but the sweet odor prevented them. At last one of them suggested wetting their fish baskets and keeping them near their noses; after that they slept soundly. Because they had been associating so long with the strong smell of fish, the fragrance of flowers had grown unbearable to them. So it is with us. If we remain always in the world, the company of God becomes unpleasant to us. If we want to make God our own, we must cultivate a taste for Him. Now God has been supplanted by worldly desire and greed. To cultivate a taste for Him, we must read the Sacred Scriptures and associate with such people as will increase our love for Him.

God is everywhere. He is in the heart and He sees

when one is eager to realize Him, for He knows everything. So Sri Krishna says that "when a man wishes to know something of Me (the Lord) and seeks Me sincerely, then I come at once and dispel all the miseries which beset his mind." God is always kindly disposed towards all, but He can only bestow His Divine blessings on those the cup of whose soul is turned towards Him, not on those the cup of whose soul is turned towards the world.

Sri Ramakrishna used to teach us that the wind of the Lord's Grace is perpetually blowing on all men, but some people have unfurled their sails to catch it and others still have their sails furled. The first make rapid growth, the others complain that God is unkind. "Here we are in mid-ocean and we make no progress," they say. They do not see that it is because of their own foolishness; that the same wind is blowing for all; that God is never partial, but His wind will only strike on sails that are spread to catch it.

Sankara uses the illustration of fire. One may be very close to the flame and thoroughly warm, while another a hundred yards distant complains of the chill. But that is not the fault of the fire. It is because the man stays far from the hearth. In the same way God is always kind, always good. He can never be a God with thunder in His hand; that can not be a true God, it is a tyrant's God. Man is a tyrant and he wishes to intimidate men so he makes such a God. On the contrary, the moment God knows that someone wants to make friends with Him, at once He runs to him. He is running everywhere to His devotees; but most people say to Him: "I have other friends, I do not want your friendship." For that one, however, who wants His friendship He quickly dispels all darkness and misery. That man becomes illumined and

perceives his own beauty, his own glory.

Having attained illumination, he sees God everywhere and for this reason he never wants for anything. Suppose you have a millionaire for your best friend, will he let you have any want? If he sees you with a torn cloth, will he not at once give you a new one? If he finds that you have not eaten, will he not at once order food to be brought? In the same way, when a man has made friends with God, his want of wisdom, his want of bliss, his want of life, he will get rid of at once. How can he want for life, when all life comes out of God? How can he want for bliss, when God is made up of pure bliss? How can he want for wisdom, when God is the Source of all wisdom? Therefore since God is his Friend, He will not let him want for anything. This is why God says: "Between Me and my devotee there is no difference. My wisdom is his wisdom, My life is his life, My happiness is his happiness."

Thus infilled with the Grace of God, the devotee's mind never cares to think about anything else except God. Formerly he plucked flowers for himself, now he plucks them only for God. He does everything that he used to do, but now he does it all for God. His service becomes not for others, not for himself, but wholly for God. If he makes a charity, he does it because God's children are there in need and he must serve them. Whatever he does, he does out of love for God. This is called true *Bhakti* or devotion. The whole tendency of the man is in the direction of God. He cannot do anything for himself, because his entire mind moves towards God and nothing else can attract him.

While the thought of the Beloved fills our hearts, all our work is to do Him service and spend life for Him.—*Jalalu'd Din.*

PRAYER.

O Lord, let me give my whole heart to Thee.
Let me always find my deepest joy and satisfaction in Thy Holy Presence.
May my thoughts rise above all the fleeting objects of this world and be fixed on Thee alone.
May my heart ever remain fixed in joy through contact with Thy Divine Being.
May it never waver nor turn away from Thee.
Lord, make me worthy of Thy blessing.
Help me to acquire wisdom for Thy service.
Give unto me such purity and holiness that I may be worthy to take Thy Name;
For Thy Sacred Name removes all sin and sorrows and imperfections;
Through Thy Name one attains Eternal Bliss.
O Infinite and Merciful One, Thou art the Goal of my existence.
Thou art the Delight of my inner being.
Thou art the Source of all my strength.
Grant unto me Thy Peace.

Swami Paramananda.

Those who worship and meditate on Me without any other thought, to these ever steadfast devotees I secure safety and I supply all their needs. Even if the most wicked worship Me with undivided devotion, he should be regarded as good, for he is rightly resolved. Very soon he becomes a righteous soul and attains to eternal peace. Know thou that My devotee never perishes. Fill thy heart with Me, be thou devoted to Me, do thou worship Me and bow down to Me. Thus thou shalt attain unto Me. Truly I promise thee, for thou art dear to Me.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

BHAKTI-YOGA.

By S. E. Waldo.

With the vast majority of mankind in every age and every land a need to worship and to reverence some Being higher than man himself forms a constituent part of their inner nature, and this inherent tendency in man's very organization has brought into existence all the varying forms of what is known as religion. In the Vedas where all grades of thought have been carefully recorded, the gradual growth and evolution of this sentiment of worship can be clearly traced, until in the Bhakti-Yoga of the Vedanta is found its highest expression, an expression which I think may be justly said to have therein reached its ultimate, in that it rises to a final unit Existence beyond which human thought has never been able to soar. It gives us an added respect for the keenness of Hindu thought when we remember that this ultimate was reached at a period in the world's history when our ancestors had not yet emerged from the savage state of existence. It was already ancient in the days of Buddha, 600 B. C.

First, in studying the subject of Bhakti-Yoga, comes naturally the necessity of getting a clear and definite conception of what is exactly meant by the words themselves. They are foreign to our ears and their meaning is foreign to our thought, although the last twenty years have somewhat familiarized the Western world with their sound. Yoga, we all know, means joining or union and is the method through which we seek to realize the Divine in our own nature. Bhakti means intense love for God, by getting which, as Narada says in his Aphorisms, "Man loves all and hates none; he becomes satisfied forever." The Hindu idea of this intense love for God excludes all desire for any advantage to be gained by loving Him. "This love

cannot be reduced to any earthly benefit," to quote again from Narada.

Bhakti is undoubtedly the easiest and the most natural way to realization, and the way likely to meet the wants of a great majority of mankind. We find that even in the history of Buddhism, a religion that teaches neither God nor soul, the strong inherent tendency to worship has led its followers to deify its Founder and worship Him. In fact the natural reaction against the loss of a really worthy object of worship has brought into modern Buddhism a larger number of idols and other symbols to be worshipped by the masses than are known in any other great religion. Even Buddha, with all His wisdom and His enlightenment, failed to appreciate the innate tendency to worship that exists in all mankind, or to recognize in this tendency an insurmountable barrier to maintaining in their purity the teachings of a religion that gives no scope and no satisfaction for this need of human nature. Every religious symbol in the world today testifies to the reality of this need; and even the most advanced among our modern thinkers, if only he will be honest with himself, will possibly discover this tendency in himself finding expression in some form or other. There is sure to be some particular book or custom or authority that he venerates above all others, often letting it influence him unduly. Man must and will worship something, even if it be only money, or social prestige, or political success.

Hindu philosophers ages ago recognized the importance of training this natural tendency of man in such a manner as to lift it above the material and temporal, and make it a means to raise man to the highest plane of spirituality. The formulated result of this effort to systematize and regulate man's inborn instinct to worship is what is known as

Bhakti-Yoga. It is complete in itself, yet it has many points in common with some of the other Yogas. In its earlier steps it may seem to contradict them, but this is because at the circumference the radii are more widely separated; although at the center they all converge and find a common goal. So it is with these different Yogas; the farther we advance in them, the nearer we draw to the attainment of their one goal, the more we find the agreement between them and learn that the contradictions were only apparent, never real. Each branch of Yoga naturally claims its special adherents and each will lead man ultimately to that One Existence; yet the ideal human character is that in which all these methods are fused and blended into one harmonious whole. Three things help the bird to fly well: two wings and the tail as the rudder. Bhakti (devotion) is one wing, Jnana (wisdom) the other, while Raja-Yoga (concentration and meditation) is the rudder that keeps the balance. The highest love must bring the highest knowledge, and that perfect knowledge is inseparable from true love.

Those who cannot follow all these three methods and who choose Bhakti alone as their way, must remember that in Bhakti-Yoga the first essential is to want God honestly and earnestly, for only love for the Supreme Lord is true Bhakti. Love for any other being, however great, is not Bhakti. Now we want everything except God, because our ordinary interests are supplied by the external world. It is only when our necessities have gone beyond the external world that we seek a supply from the internal one, from God. So long as our needs are confined within the narrow limits of the physical universe, we cannot have any need for God; it is only when we have become satiated or disappointed with every thing here and feel the need of some-

thing higher than it all that we look beyond for a supply. And with the demand the supply will surely come. Bhakti is not destructive; it teaches that no one of our faculties has been given us in vain, but that through them all is the natural way to reach salvation. Bhakti tells us to give these faculties a higher and more powerful direction, to give only to God that love which is usually wasted on the fleeting objects of sense, and yet which with most of us is sufficiently intense to blind us to higher things.

Bhakti-Yoga begins with certain rules to be observed by those who wish to follow this method of realization. The first is called *Viveka*, which here means discrimination regarding food. As our bodies are manufactured out of food, from the finer particles of which we have to manufacture our brain and our thoughts, it naturally follows that both body and mind must feel the effects of the food we take. It is obvious that certain kinds of food produce certain changes in the mind. This is quickly apparent in all alcoholic beverages and only less rapidly felt in the case of many other things we eat. Therefore, to keep the mind calm and easily under control, Bhakti-Yoga prescribes food of a simple, unexciting character, to be partaken of in moderate quantities and at regular hours. It strongly recommends vegetable diet, at any rate at first, as all meat is a stimulant. The next thing is to get rid of extreme desires (*Vimoksha*) and to want only God. The third thing is *Abhyasa* (practice). This means that by patient effort the mind must be controlled and allowed to think only such thoughts as are pure and high and will lead it towards God. As a help to this it is advised that we read only books which tell of God and speak only words about God. Here it is that music comes in as a great help. It has a tremendous power over the human mind to tranquillize and spiritualize it.

The fourth thing is *Kriya* (work); that is, to do good, unselfish deeds and strive to help others. Bhakti-Yoga recognizes five special kinds of work as aids to devotion: (1) study: every day to study something good and holy; (2) worship of God or of saints; (3) duty to our family; (4) duty to human beings: to be charitable and to consider the welfare of others before that of oneself; and (5) duty to the lower animals: to be gentle and considerate towards them, never abusing them or killing them unnecessarily. After *Kriya* comes *Satyam* (truthfulness): to be perfectly true in thought, word and deed. Next *Arjavam* (straightforwardness), to have no double dealing. Next *Daya* (pity, compassion); next *Dana* (charity): giving liberally to those in need. Next comes *Ahimsa*, non-injuring in thought, word or deed. Next is *Anavasada* (cheerfulness). Love makes us happy, not miserable, and he who truly loves God is the happiest of men. Then lastly we are warned against *Uddharsha* (excessive merriment). The mind should be ever cheerful but calm at the same time. It is the steady flame of serene happiness that is wanted, not the flash of sudden gaiety which is apt to be followed by depression. These are the preparations for Bhakti.

Bhakti is divided into two portions: first the preparatory stage, second the supreme. The former is the part that treats of the form or ceremonial which is necessary at the beginning of a life of devotion and worship. Every one has to take the particular road suited to his own nature and its needs; and these roads, though various, are all true and helpful because they all lead to the same goal. This choice of a particular method is called the *Ishta*, meaning the "chosen way". This *Ishta* or chosen way is a matter to be kept to oneself, not because it is secret, but

because it is sacred to oneself alone and to talk about it to others would only lead to useless discussion and waste of temper and time. Next come words and symbols as helps to the aspiring Bhakti or devotee. Bhakti-Yoga teaches that certain words have great power to help us toward spirituality; these sacred words are called *mantras*, and are given by the Guru or teacher to the disciple for the latter to repeat when at his devotions.

There is also another idea in this giving of the holy word,—that with it is transmitted a certain spiritual force which has been handed down in this manner through the ages, and that this spiritual force will give great help to the disciple and enable him to hold fast to the upward way. No doubt this idea is at the bottom of the custom of the "laying on of hands" in ordaining priests and ministers and in other religious ceremonies. The Bhakta believes that the quickening impulse necessary to awaken spiritual life can never be derived from books, but can only come to one soul from another soul, as one lamp is lighted from another. In spiritual development, as in all other development, two things are imperative:—first, a properly prepared receptacle; and second, a living seed to be placed therein. Only thus can growth take place.

The chief difference between Bhakti and what is usually called religion here in the West lies in the fact that two things which are very prominent in the one find no place whatever in the other. Bhakti knows no idea of fear, no Being to be appeased or propitiated. The Bhaktas even worship God as their own child, so that any such idea as awe or reverence may be entirely eliminated. True love can never know fear and while fear lasts Bhakti cannot even begin. Still less has Bhakti any place for begging and bargaining. To the Bhakta the idea of asking God for

anything would be sacrilege. Even to pray to go to Heaven is considered unworthy and beneath true Bhakti.

In the forcible words of Swami Vivekananda: "One who wants to love God, to be a Bhakta, must make a bundle of all these and throw them all out of the door and enter. He who wants to enter the realms of light must make a bundle of all 'shopkeeping' religion and cast it away before he can enter the gates. It is not that you do not get what you pray for; you get everything, but it is low, vulgar, a beggar's religion. 'Fool indeed is he who, living on the banks of the Ganges, digs a little well for water. Fool indeed is the man who, coming to a mine of diamonds, begins to search for glass beads.' These prayers for health and wealth and material prosperity are not Bhakti. They are the lowest form of Karma. Bhakti is a higher thing. We are striving to come into the presence of the King of kings. We cannot get there in a beggar's dress. If we wanted to enter the presence of an emperor would we be admitted in a beggar's rags? Certainly not. The lackey would drive us out of the gates. This is the Emperor of emperors and never can we come before Him in beggar's garb. Shopkeepers never have admission there, buying and selling will not do there at all. As you read in the Bible, 'He drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple.' So it goes without saying that the first task in becoming a Bhakta is to give up all those desires of heaven and so on. Such a heaven would be like these places, only a little better. All this desire to go to heaven is a desire after enjoyment. This has to be given up."

This quotation will clearly show how widely the idea of the Bhakta differs from that ordinarily taught as religion. He has no notion of being a "sinner" and of escaping the consequences of his sins by accepting certain beliefs.

All such ideas appear to the Bhakta as unworthy of any religion, as beneath real devotion to God. Just at first he may pray to God to return his love; but as he rises on the path even that idea vanishes and he cares only to lavish his love on God, asking nothing in return. Bhakti-Yoga is above all the Yoga of pure, unadulterated love; of that love which includes the whole universe, which cannot even know hate and therefore cannot feel it. This love must be pure and unselfish, seeking nothing for itself, either here or hereafter. This kind of love, once started on its divine path of glorious consummation, goes on increasing until all distinction of lover and beloved is lost, and the lover becomes, as it were, resolved into Infinite Love—that one inexpressible ocean of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss.

THE LOTUS FLOWER.

By Fanneal Harrison.

My love, thou art the lovely lotus flower
A thousand petalled blossom in my heart,
Each petal glowing in its consummate art,
Unfolding perfect through the darkest hour,
Uppushing through the ooze thy beauteous dower,
Awaiting breathless, rapt, thy lover's part
As thy Lord, the Sun, greets thee with virile dart,
Embracing thee in infinite love and power.
In a thousand ways, my Lord, I would love Thee,
Untainted each as the Hindu's sacred bloom,
And if to strive through darkness is my doom,
Let me be too of lotus purity,
Growing through slime, unspotted by the mire,
To blossom perfectly my sole desire.

THE GOAL OF LIFE.

Extract by Swami Vivekananda.

To think that this world is the end and aim of life is brutal and degenerating. Any man who starts in life with that idea degenerates himself. He will never rise higher, he will never catch a glimpse of what is behind, he will always be a slave to the senses. Better die than live that life. Slaves of this world, slaves of the senses, let us rouse ourselves; there is something higher than this sense-life. Do you think that man, the Infinite Spirit, was born to be a slave to his eyes, his nose and his ears? There is an Infinite, Omniscient Spirit behind that can do everything, break every bond; that Spirit we are, and we get that power through Love. We cannot of course get it in a day. We must take man where he stands and help him upward. Man stands in materialism; you and I are materialists. So we have to take ourselves where we are as materialists, and accepting the help of matter go on slowly until we feel ourselves Spirit, understand the Spirit and find that this world which we call infinite is but a gross external form of that world which is behind.

But something besides that is necessary. We read in the Sermon on the Mount: "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." The difficulty is, who seeks, who wants? Let us ask ourselves this question every day : Do we want God? We may read all the books in the universe, but this love is not to be had by the power of speech, not by the highest intellect, not by the study of the various sciences. He who desires God will get Love, unto him God gives Himself.

If you want to love, love God. Who cares for these things of the world? God is the Goal of our life. This world and this body have their own value, a secondary

value, as a means to an end. Unfortunately too often we make the world the end and God the means. We find people going to church and saying: "God give me so and so, God heal my disease." They want nice healthy bodies and because they hear that someone will do this work for them, they go and pray to Him. Bhakti has a higher ideal.

We have slowly to work through the world and the senses to reach God. As oil poured from one vessel to another falls in an unbroken line, as chimes coming from a distance fall upon the ear as one continuous sound, so should the mind flow towards God in one continuous stream. We should not only impose this practice on the mind, but our senses too should be employed. Instead of hearing foolish things, we must hear about God. Instead of talking foolish words, we must talk of God. Instead of reading foolish books, we must read good ones which tell of God. The mind too must be cheerful. Despondency is not religion, whatever else it may be. Being pleasant always and smiling takes you to God, nearer than any prayer. How can minds that are gloomy and dull love? Every man has his own burden to bear. If you are miserable, try to be happy, try to conquer it.

Never be weak. You must be strong; you have Infinite strength within you. How else will you conquer anything? How else will you come to God? Be strong, stand up and seek the God of love. This is the highest strength. This love of God cannot be reached by the weak; therefore be not weak, either physically, mentally, morally or spiritually. The Lord alone is true, everything else is untrue; everything else should be rejected for the sake of the Lord. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Serve the Lord and Him alone.

KAN-APPAN, THE EYE-SAINT.

From Indian Sacred Writings.

There once lived a forest chieftain who spent all his days in hunting, and he had a son surnamed the Sturdy. This boy went with his father on the chase and when the elder prince had grown too feeble to follow through the jungle, the youth continued to go forth each morning with a retinue of servants to hunt. So it happened that one day when he had slain a wild boar and would have roasted it, there was no water; so he took the boar on his shoulder and with his servants pushed further into the forest in search of a stream or lake. Before long they came to the sacred hill of Kalaharti, on the summit of which stood an image of the Great God. Perceiving it, Sturdy called: "Come let us go there and worship." But as he mounted the slope the dead beast on his shoulder grew lighter and lighter, and his heart was filled with wonder. Throwing down the boar, he ran swiftly on to seek the cause and found himself before a stone lingam the top of which was shaped into the head of Shiva, the third person of the Vedic Trinity. Something in the roughly-hewn image spoke to the soul of the simple hunter, rousing it from its slumber, and with a cry of joy, as of a son who has found his mother, he ran to embrace it. His servants believing he had gone mad, sought to recall him to himself, but he refused to heed their words and pushed them vehemently aside.

Seeing that some one had recently worshipped the image with flowers and water, the thought came to Sturdy that he too might serve it; so he hurried back to the camp, chose some tender parts of the boar, tasting them himself to assure himself that they were good, took water in his mouth from the river, and running to the image, he sprinkled

it with the water from his mouth, offered it the roasted flesh, and crowned it with the garland of wild flowers from his own head, praying fervently to the God to receive his gifts. Then the sun set and all the night he kept vigil with strung bow to guard his Deity. When the dawn broke he went forth again to hunt that he might have fresh offerings to lay before the Lord.

While he was absent a devout Brahman, having bathed and chanted many prayers, came for his accustomed worship bearing with him pure water in a holy vessel, fresh flowers and carefully washed leaves. Seeing that his sacred image had been defiled with flesh and unclean water, he was overcome with horror and beat his head against the earth in an agony of grief. Then he cleansed the image, performed his worship and went back to his hermitage in the jungle.

Thus from day to day the Brahman worshipped in the morning and the rough hunter at the evening hour, until the Brahman devotee could bear the desecration of his shrine no longer and with passionate invocation he implored the Great God to protect His image. In the night Shiva appeared before him and said: "That which seems desecration to you is to me purest adoration. This ignorant hunter of the forest is unschooled in sacred rites. He knows nothing of the rules of worship. But regard not his crude mode of serving, look beneath and see the motive that impels him. His heart burns with intensest love, which makes his offering holy and acceptable unto me. Wait until tomorrow and you shall understand."

The next evening Shiva hid the Brahman near the shrine, then to test to the utmost the hunter's devotion, he caused a semblance of blood to flow from the right eye of His image. As Sturdy approached with his customary offer-

ing, he beheld the blood and cried out in pain: "O Lord, who hath wounded Thee? Who hath been guilty of this wicked act when I was not near to guard Thee?" And he sought in and out through the forest but could find no one. Then he tried to soothe the hurt with herbs, still in vain. At last remembering what a doctor had once told him,—that like cures like, he cut out his own right eye with a pointed arrow and laid it on the bleeding wound; at once the blood was staunched. But alas! the left eye now began to bleed. For a moment he was despairing, then marking its place, that he might not fail when he could no longer see, he took the arrow to plunge beneath his other eye, but at that moment an arm was extended from the lingam to stay his hand and a voice was heard saying: "Enough! Henceforth thou shalt ever have a place by my side in Kailas." Then the Brahman saw that whole-hearted devotion alone measures the merit of all service to the Lord. And to this day Sturdy, the simple hunter, is honored as Kan-Appan, the Eye-Saint.

Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God. O sight to be wished, desired, and longed for; because once to have seen Thee is to have learnt all things. Nothing can bring us to this sight but love. But what love must it be? Not a sensible love only, a childish love, a love which seeketh itself more than the beloved. No, no, but it must be an ardent love, a pure love, a courageous love, a love of charity, an humble love, and a constant love, not worn out with labors, not daunted with any difficulties. For that soul that hath set her whole love and desire on Thee can never find any true satisfaction, but only in Thee.—*Saint Theresa.*

THE VALUE OF SYMBOLS.

By Sister Devamata.

When out of the great void of undifferentiated substance there sprang the first form, at that moment was created the symbol. The heavens and the earth, the waters and all the elements came forth as signs and symbols of the Eternal. Each form rising out of the formless was a new God-symbol through which man might learn to worship. On and on through a multiplication of symbols creation moved, until every word even became a symbol. Thus man lives in symbols, plays with symbols, works with symbols, strives for symbols. The question then in religion can never be, Shall we have symbols? but, How can we utilize them to enrich our spiritual life?

Secular education has advanced steadily towards an increased use of them. The systems of both Froebel and Mme. Montessori are a frank admission of the fundamental value of symbols in training the mind. Their method of object-lessons has completely undermined the old method of learning by rote. Yet strangely enough, whereas the vast majority of people are ready to admit the advantages of this more concrete method in secular education, when it comes to religion the very mention of a symbol seems to them a sign of ignorance and superstition. They acknowledge that we cannot successfully educate without them in the school, but they are unbending in their conviction that we must not educate with them in the church.

Yet it is only along the line of nature that man can grow on any plane of being. The reason why religious practice in the West has moved in recent times with such limping, faltering step is because men have tried to defeat nature, to fight against her, to adopt the unnatural way. Struggle has been mistaken for religion and made the

measure of fervor. The idea has not been to take all our powers and tendencies as they stand and use them for God; but rather to petrify them, to mutilate them, instead of worshipping God through them. Vedanta on the contrary says: Take yourself just as you are, study the principles of your nature, see how analagous growth is on all planes; then follow out the same natural method in spiritual training as you pursue in secular branches; that is, move with childlike simplicity from symbol to symbol until you are led spontaneously to That behind which is symbolized.

In religion even more than in the classroom we cannot afford to do away with symbols. It is foolish to talk about abstract Truth to a man who is wholly concrete in all his mind life. He knows nothing of abstraction and cannot be taught through it. The Roman church recognized this fact and that is why the average Catholic finds such satisfaction in his religion. That which we may condemn in the Church does not rise from the use of symbols, but from their misuse. The use of any earthly thing to a Godly end is never evil. It is the use of the Divine to human ends that brings corruption and degeneration. Vedanta realizes that every little child in the spirit must have its toys; and whatever our age, when we enter on the spiritual life we are again children and should treat ourselves as such. Every object in the well-equipped nursery, even the paper on the wall, is made a means of awakening the baby mind; so holy pictures, sacred images, an altar or house chapel, all such objects serve more than we can realize in rousing our spiritual nature and in cultivating that reverence which is so painfully lacking in the present day.

"But God is everywhere. To give Him a definite place or form is to limit Him," is a frequent objection made. Knowledge is everywhere. When you bring it into your

mind in some definite shape, do you limit it? Rather have you not made it more wholly yours? In reality, the more real and definite becomes your idea of any truth in the universe, the more you possess it. As long as we hold to these prejudices and try to treat ourselves as grown-ups in religion, we shall remain dry and stunted in our devotional nature. Many of the Protestant Churches, which were fanatically iconoclastic a generation ago, are beginning to recognize this and are trying to move away from the vague and abstract and introduce a more definite devotional element into their worship.

The principles of the kindergarten are invaluable in the earlier stages of the spiritual life. All around us are tangible objects. We are smothered under the concrete and only a loftier concrete can extricate us. As Sri Ramakrishna says: "When we have a thorn in our foot, we take another thorn to pluck it out, then we can throw both away." So we must offset the glaring definiteness of our outer life by making our daily religious life more definite, more real. We must crowd out the lower symbol by a higher. As we have photographs of our relations and friends all about us, let us in one quiet corner put some sacred picture that will remind us now and then of God. Near it let us keep a fragrant flower. Why should that be a greater superstition than to place them on our dining table or in our livingroom? Let us put there a few books which in the hour of solitude will rest our minds from the weariness of all the purposeless reading of our other hours. As in the olden time the fleeing offender sought sanctuary in the Cathedral Close, so let us learn to seek refuge in this quiet corner when the world pursues us too hotly. We shall be surprised what peace and renewal of strength it will bring us.

We need not be afraid that our toys will check our development or make us narrow and superstitious. As we acquire the lessons they are meant to teach, we shall drop them unconsciously and pass on to other larger toys. Human beings are by their very nature idol-worshippers. Carlyle writes in his *Heroes and Hero-Worship*: "Idol is *Eidolon*, a thing seen, a symbol. It is not God, but a symbol of God, and perhaps one may question whether the most benighted mortal ever took it for more than a symbol. I fancy, he did not think that the poor image that his own hands had made *was God;* but that God was emblemed by it, that God was in it some way or other. And even in this sense, one may ask, is not all worship whatsoever a worship by symbols, by *eidola*, or things seen? Whether *seen*, rendered visible as an image or a picture to the bodily eye; or visible to the inward eye, to the imagination to the intellect: this makes a superficial, but no substantial difference. It is still a Thing Seen, significant of Godhead; an Idol. The most rigorous Puritan has his Confession of Faith, and intellectual Representation of Divine things, and worships thereby; thereby is worship first made possible for him. All creeds, liturgies, religious forms, conceptions, that fitly invest religious feelings, are in this sense *eidola*, things seen."

The man who throws away all religious idols inevitably turns to other and often baser idols. He is wise who takes the *Eidolon* or symbol which appeals to him and gradually transforms it from a symbol of matter into a symbol of God. Often because something within us revolts against these outer form and symbols, we imagine that it is because we have gone beyond them; it is more often because our nature is undeveloped on that side and hence we cannot perceive their use and value. The scales of traditional

prejudice cover our eyes and prevent us from seeing anything beyond the material form. Yet the most rigid Protestant, who is loudest in his denunciation of idolatry or symbology in any guise, will look with placid gaze upon a lamb or dove, a cross or star on the walls of his own church or in its windows. Whenever we find ourselves hard and stiff, whether in mind or body, it means that exercise is needed; and nothing more quickly softens our inner nature than some simple devotional practices carried on faithfully from day to day. There is no greater poverty in religion than lack of devotion. And whatever tends to awaken this spirit within us should be accepted with eagerness. The loving heart unconsciously gathers around it any object that reminds it of the beloved, and so the earnest devotee is quick to seize the smallest symbol or practice that makes God more real to him. Through this he cultivates the habit of seeing the Divine in all things, until at last he reaches the point where, as Emerson said of Thoreau, "the whole universe is a symbol"—a glowing symbol of the Infinite and Eternal Lord.

REPORTS.

The regular Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service at Vrindavan has just reached us. This Hospital was established 9 years ago to care for the multitudes of pilgrims who come each year to this, one of the most Sacred Shrines of India. Like all Centres of the Ramakrishna Mission, it began very modestly in some outhouses of a Temple. A plot of land of over 8 acres has now been secured and those in charge of the Home are making strenuous efforts to raise sufficient funds to erect a proper hospital, as the extraordinary increase in the number of patients makes it imperative to provide larger and

better quarters. During the year under review, the Report tells us, 36,717 cases were treated and a small number were cared for in their homes, being supplied with food and medicines.

* * *

The monthly report from the Swami Saradananda, Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, regarding the Famine Relief Work reads: "Since our last report the prospect in the Bankura District has grown a bit brighter. It is now raining there so cultivation has begun and the great water scarcity has been partially relieved. But the famine continues, and the people are destitute. They require money and seeds besides food. We have distributed 16,600 pounds of seeds besides giving the pecuniary help necessary for other purposes. We have finished the excavation of 9 tanks (artificial ponds) and 6 wells. The Ladua Canal is completed and we are running two branches from it into the interior. These with the main canal will irrigate nearly 1,000 acres of land. About 400 cases of sickness have received care and medicines; and we have helped to rebuild a large number of huts destroyed by storm or fire. The situation in the Tipperah District remains grave and we hope for more aid from the public to meet the suffering here. In the last month we have distributed to 17,278 people in 1205 villages, 68,794 pounds of rice. Clothes were also distributed from all our Centres.

* * *

The following news comes to us in a letter from a member of the study group formed in Geneva under the inspiration of Swami Paramananda's two seasons of teaching there: "We hope to begin our meetings again on the first Monday in October at 4.30. We shall read alternately the Karma Yoga and the different articles in the Message.

Miss K. is translating the Karma Yoga (into French) and Mrs. v. N. translates the articles or Mrs. V. and myself, when we take the turn to read. How glad we shall be when things are normal again and the Swami can be among us once more. It is just two years since he left us, but his presence is felt among us as if it were but yesterday and I do not think it can fade."

* * *

It is expected that the Swami Paramananda will return to Boston at the close of the present month and resume charge of the Vedanta Centre here. His season of nearly five months in Los Angeles has been full of encouragement. The members of the Centre formed there have enjoyed fully their new home in South Hoover St. and have found it in every way well adapted to their needs. Besides the meetings held at the Centre, the Swami began on the evening of September 17th at Symphony Hall a second course of public lectures to be carried through five consecutive Sundays, his subjects being: "Occultism and Mysticism," "Faith and Reason," "Spiritual Idealism of the Vedas," "The Science of Self-Mastery" and "The Law of Compensation." On the 12th of September he also gave a dinner to a number of the members. The interest in the new Centre is steadily increasing and the work will continue after the Swami leaves, but it is not yet announced who will take charge of it while he is in the East.

At the Vedanta Centre of Boston, the summer season was on the whole a satisfactory one. A number of strangers came to the meetings and some among them have become regular attendants. The Thursday Class was resumed on September 21st and the full schedule of meetings will continue henceforth.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

The Message of the East

NOVEMBER 1916

Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE

1 Queensberry St., Boston, Mass. U. S. A.

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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REPORTS.

SERVICES and LECTURES

BY

Swami Paramananda

of India

Chapel of the Vedanta Centre

1 Queensberry Street, Fenway

EIGHTH SEASON—1916

SUNDAY, 11 A. M.

SUBJECTS

November 5th *The Four-fold Path of Yoga.*
" *12th* *Karma and Fate.*
" *19th* *Emerson and Vedanta.*
" *26th* *Occultism and Mysticism.*

VESPER SERVICE SUNDAY 5 P. M.

(*Meditation, Music and Short Address.*)

Public cordially invited to both Services.

CLASS LECTURES

Tuesday 8 P. M. Lessons from the Bhagavad-Gita.
Open to all.

Thursday 8 P. M. Practical Spiritual Instruction.
For Members only.

THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

VOL. V. NOVEMBER, 1916. No. 11.

UNIVERSAL IDEAL OF RELIGION.

Lecture by Swami Paramananda.

"There are neither two Gods, nor three, nor four, nor ten. He is One and only One and pervades the whole universe. All other things live, move and have their being in Him." Such is the definition of the Supreme given in the Atharva-Veda. "There is one eternal God, the Cause of all things. He is the Divine Mind, the Infinite Wisdom, who brought matter out of chaos into order and produced the world we see," are the words of the Greek Anaxagoras; and the Koran declares: "There is One God and God is the One, the Ever-living. He knoweth the past and the future, but no one comprehendeth anything of His knowledge except that which He revealeth. His sway extends over heavens and earth, and it is no burden to Him to sustain them both. He is the High, the Mighty One." In the Jewish Scriptures the Lord, speaking through Isaiah, says: "I am God, there is none else"; and in St. Mark we read: "There is one God and there is none other but He," to which St. Paul adds: "In Him we live and move and have our being."

Thus we see that wherever we find a true definition of Godhead, it strikes a chord which is similar and universal. Why is it then that we cannot have one ideal or one form of religion? If there is a fundamental unity, why must we have such diversity in creeds and Scriptures? We may also ask: Why are human beings not all alike? Why do we not

look alike? Why do we not use the same language, or act in the same way? May it not be because we are so different in our nature and development, in our power of comprehension and expression, that there is such variety in religious ideals? If this be true, then we must not try to destroy any of the various forms of religion, from the crudest ritualism to the highest monism, but we must strive to understand them all and see their usefulness in this world of diversity.

We can never attain a universal ideal through exclusiveness, by rejecting everything. It can only be reached by allowing a place for every phase of belief. This point is carefully set forth by the Aryan Sages. God is One, they say, but His children are many and comprehend Him in many different ways. There are some who are content to know Him as they hear of Him from others; there are some who try to grasp Him wholly by the aid of reason; and there are others who are never satisfied until they perceive the direct Vision. So religion falls into three general classes: ritualistic and dogmatic religion,—that is religion bound by creeds; philosophic or rationalistic religion; and realistic religion, religion which is no longer a matter of mere discussion and theorizing, but which has become a reality through direct perception. These represent the three different steps in religious development; and as we travel along the path from the lower to the higher forms, we gradually discover a basis of harmony. When religion becomes real, we do not see so many differences.

In all dogmatic religions, each one claims that his religion is the only religion, his God the only God, and his prophet the only true prophet. The religious ideal is confined to a narrow circle and whatever falls outside that circle must be denounced. Thus the scope of ritualistic or

dogmatic religion is very small. A rational man, on the other hand, one who has a philosophical mind, can more easily make allowances for others' point of view; but remaining as he does on the plane of speculative reason, he cannot so fully realize the ideal of harmony as can the follower of realistic religion, who actually feels God's love, perceives His Presence and hears His voice speak within him. Only when we reach this state are we able to see clearly that we are all children of God and that just as a garland is strung on one thread, similarly are we all strung on the same thread of Universal Spirit.

All diversities vanish as we realize the fundamental principles of religion. So long as we remain satisfied with books, ceremonies and creeds, we cannot help but look down on those who do not agree with us. Only the man who has transcended the limitations of form and has embraced the essential part of religion, which is to feel the presence of God within, can find a common basis for the many varying phases of religious teaching. But that very man, following faithfully his path, will realize the Goal. Therefore we must not disturb his faith along the way.

This was one of the great ideals of the Indian Sages,—never to destroy anything, because they knew that even the crudest, most creed-bound believer is gradually evolving God-consciousness and will in time gain the same perception as the highest monistic philosopher. They realized that only by finding unity in variety would it be possible to establish a true basis for a universal ideal. No religion can claim to be a universal religion so long as it says that anyone who does not accept its faith must be condemned or annihilated. At once that irritates other minds and awakens intolerance and fanaticism. The Vedic Teaching conceives another method of establishing a universal plat-

form,—not by destroying, but by recognizing that all paths lead to the same Goal. It says: God is One. There cannot be many Infinite Beings. Therefore all men are seeking that one God. Yet although there is only One Infinite Being, He can express Himself in many finite forms. He has no limitation, hence infinite may be the roads that lead to Him. When we have this well understood in our hearts, then we do not condemn anyone, we do not attack anyone's faith. We remain firm in our own faith, but we grant the same freedom to others. We must be free and we must give others freedom, for through freedom alone can we realize that Infinite Spirit Who is free. Creeds and rituals were not meant to bind us. Their purpose was to help us decrease the bondage of our lives. The world is a source of bondage, the bondage of matter, and we counteract that by adopting certain forms to advance our spiritual culture. When through the aid of these our spiritual consciousness has been cultivated, then we shall see that all forms are but different means to the same end.

Only by bringing the spirit of religion into our daily life can we reach true brotherhood and harmony. It is those alone who live the life, who become universal. But we must live the life according to our nature. There are some who are naturally active, who can best express their religious ideal through activity, and there is no reason why they should not do so. By following a systematic method of unselfish cheerful work, work which elevates and purifies, they will attain. Then there is the path of philosophy, reason, discrimination, which is for people born with a strong intellectual tendency; and there are still other paths for those of meditative or devotional nature. But we must always remember that the end of the spiritual life, however we may live it, is to make religion a real thing; and

when people do this and attain the ideal there is little difference. A Saint in India and a Saint in Christendom or a Saint anywhere who has gained the Vision of God is the same. He does not quarrel or dispute, for his path is the path of love and non-resistance.

When we have reached the same point, we shall become a centre of universal consciousness. Do not think that the universal ideal can be reached by forming a group of people into a society, with an established creed or faith. It has never been reached in that way and it never will be reached in that way. Do not all religions point to the same goal? Does not God form the centre of them all? Then by going to the centre, shall we not all meet? If there is a God, we must know Him. If He is our Father, we must feel His loving protection. If He is our Friend, we must consult Him. He must not be a Being apart from us. And herein lies the whole secret. As long as a religious ideal remains a distant, abstract, impossible ideal, it can never lead to the realization of the universal ideal. It is more often the cause of quarrels and wars. Such theoretical religion tends to divide us and make us feel diversity, while realization of God destroys the sense of diversity and binds us together.

We must therefore first of all comprehend the meaning of religion. Is religion a matter of tradition or is it a matter of individual perception? Can we be content merely to have faith in what other people have said and believed? No; we must see for ourselves, for that is the only safe basis of faith. But there will always be many who follow blindly, clinging to some special creed and form, and we should not destroy their ideal, whatever it may be. Different people need different forms of religion, because their minds vary in understanding. We are all children of God,

but we do not all know it. Most of us feel conscious only that we are children of mortals. The ordinary man, who has no power to understand the principles of religion, has to accept what others give him. That is the only way he can have a religion. There is no use in blaming him. He has not evolved the faculties to see for himself. People who ask you to come and join them because they are universal are really inconsistent, for the two ideas cannot co-exist. The idea of joining a fixed organization and the idea of universality cannot go together. Universality comes when we have grown so broad that everyone seems to belong to our fold and there is no thought of differentiation or denunciation left. This was manifested in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. He did not find any difference between a true Christian or a true Mohammedan or a true Hindu. Whoever approached Him with yearning for God was equally dear, no matter whether he belonged to another creed or nation or to His own. When that spirit shines in us, all the fictitious barriers of name, form, creed, nationality, which we create ourselves, will vanish. We must therefore strive to realize the fundamental principles of religion and no longer be content merely to believe something which some one has said in a book. We must know by practical demonstration that certain things are true; and practical demonstration is possible only when religion becomes a vital thing. When we live it, when we are actuated by a spiritual motive in all we do, then we expand and the universal ideal is realized in our hearts.

It is character which is the final testimony in every faith. If you are a Christian, live the life and manifest the qualities of Christ,—non-resistance, love and universal tolerance. If you are a Buddhist, manifest the teaching of Buddha, who did not hesitate to sacrifice his life even for

animals. When you do this, then you enjoy the reality of religion. The Vedic Scriptures tell us that the purpose of religion is not to stimulate our intellect or to fill our brain with words, it is to give us the beatific vision, by perceiving which we shall transcend all limitations of body and mind and become the mouthpiece of God. We are all destined to do this and it is better that we feel conscious of it. We must not think that religion exists merely for our personal salvation. It is the keynote of everything. There would not be war, intolerance and all the hideous conditions existing in the world, if we would strive for the realization of the true spirit of religion.

It is lack of comprehension which brings condemnation, hatred and the sense of difference; for we do not find these as a part of any religious teaching. There is not one single religion, whether in the East or the West, which advocates the spirit of hatred or intolerance; yet through the ages men have been falling under the sway of these instead of manifesting the Spirit of God. Why is this? Because religion is merely a word with us, a matter of belonging to a church, of feeling sympathy for some little group of people and condemning all others. But God does not condemn anyone. His sun shines on all and He is in all. When we realize His all-pervading Spirit, when we feel actual relationship with Him through our life, then we feel related to the universe. Now that relation is broken into pieces, but until we can reunite these broken pieces into one whole through our regained consciousness, we shall never find a basis for universal tolerance. It will always remain mere words, a mockery. We talk of universal religion and then denounce one who does not agree with us. The reason is that we are one-sided. A man is born with a devotional nature and he laughs at one who tries to fathom the mys-

teries of God through reasoning; while a man who is intellectual thinks that the man who is trying to reach God by worship and prayer is weak and superstitious. This should not be. We should realize that infinite are the roads which lead to Infinite Being; that devotion, philosophy, reasoning, work, all play a part in our spiritual elevation.

When God is known, the spirit of intolerance and condemnation will cease and we shall find true unity in the midst of diversity. So no matter what may be our conviction or our conception of God, let us above all try to find Him. Having found Him, all these other questions which seem so complicated and perplexing will no longer appear difficult. Let us stop laying so much stress on difference. Let us strive with heart and soul to find the fundamental unity within. We do not need to abandon our faith or religion in order to be universal, but let us seek through it the Universal Spirit and we shall soon see that It is not confined in any one form. What we have is good for our progress and what other people have may be the best thing for them. When by following our special path with wholehearted devotion we have all realized our Ideal, we shall find that all differences have vanished and we have reached the Centre, which is God.

It must be that when God speaketh, he should communicate not one thing, but all things; should fill the world with His voice; should scatter forth light, nature, time, souls, from the centre of the present thought; and new date and new create the whole. Whenever a mind is simple, and receives a divine wisdom, then old things pass away—means, teachers, texts, temples fall; it lives now, and absorbs past and present into the present hour. *Emerson.*

SELECTION FROM THE SVETASVATARA-UPANISHAD.

Let us know that highest great Lord of lords, the highest Deity of deities, the Master of masters, the highest above, as God, the Lord of the world, the Adorable.

There is no effect and no cause of Him, no one is seen like unto Him or better; His high power is revealed as manifold, as inherent, acting as force and as knowledge.

There is no master of His in the world, no ruler of His, not even a sign of Him. He is the Cause, the Lord of the lords of the organs, and there is of Him neither parent nor lord.

He is the one God, hidden in all beings, all-pervading, the Self within all beings, watching over all works, dwelling in all beings, the Witness, the Perceiver, the only One, free from attributes.

He is the one Ruler of many who (seem to act, but really do) not act; He makes the one seed manifold. The wise who perceive Him within their self, to them belongs eternal happiness, not to others.

He is the Eternal among eternals, the Thinker among thinkers, who though one fulfils the desires of many. He who has known that Cause to be apprehended by Sankhya (philosophy) and Yoga (religious discipline), he is freed from all fetters.

The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and stars, nor these lightnings and much less this fire. When He shines, everything shines after Him; by His light all this is lighted.

He is the one bird (Hamsa or Highest Self) in the midst of the world; He is also (like) the fire (of the sun) that has set in the ocean. A man who knows Him truly, passes over death; there is no other path to go.

He makes all, He knows all, the self-caused, the Knower, the Time of time; who assumes qualities and knows everything; the Master of nature and of man; the Lord of the three Gunas (states of matter); the Cause of the bondage, the existence and the liberation of the world.

Seeking for freedom I go for refuge to that God Who is the light of His own thoughts . . . Who is without parts, without taint, the highest bridge to immortality—like a fire that has consumed its fuel.

Only when men shall roll up the sky like a hide will there be an end of misery, unless God has first been known.

THE PERSONAL GOD AND THE ABSOLUTE.

From the Bengalee Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.

"So far and no further" can never be said of God; He is without form and with form as well. Those that are Jnanis (followers of the path of wisdom), to whom this world appears as a shadowy dream, to them He is formless and impersonal. But the devotee who feels himself one entity and the world quite another, to him God appears in His personal aspect with form. The Jnani constantly discriminates regarding the Truth, negating all phenomena, saying "Not this," "Not this." As a result of such discrimination, there awakens in him the consciousness that "all,—ego, the world,—all is false, like an evanescent dream." Then he realizes Brahman (the Absolute) in his own consciousness, but cannot describe by word of mouth what His nature is. Do you know what it is like? It is like a vast ocean, an ocean of *Satchidanandam* (Absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss), an infinite expanse, no shores to bound it anywhere; but here and there its waters get congealed through the cold of Bhakti and take the solid form of ice, that is, He manifests Himself before His devotees asuming

some personal form. With the rising of the sun of Jnani (wisdom), however, the ice melts away; then no more is He felt to have a personal aspect and hence one can no longer see His personal forms. What He is then, no one can tell. Who is there to say? The one who would say has vanished, no trace of his "I" is to be found.

When one proceeds with the analysis of the self, the ego or the "I" vanishes away in the process. Just like the onion: peel off first the red outer skin, then the next thick white one, then again the next and next and next, until ultimately the whole thing disappears, you find no kernel within. When one finds no more his "I" existing—and who is left to seek it then?—there, at that stage, who can express how one realizes Brahman in Consciousness? It is the sign of knowledge that when it dawns fully in man, he becomes silent. When a farmer cuts a channel to bring water into his field from the neighboring tank, the water flows out with great noise; as soon as the water of the field comes up to the level of the tank, the noise is no more heard. All difficulties disappear when the "I" dies.

But however you may argue, analyze, and reason, the ego never disappears completely. Hence for men like you and me it is good to have the ego of a devotee, "I am a devotee of God." For the devotee God is the *Saguna-Brahman,* God of infinite attributes. He manifests as a person with forms. He also hears prayers. Whatever prayers you utter are made to Him only. It does not matter much whether you accept the forms of God or not. It is enough to have the feeling that God is a Person—the One who hears our prayers, who creates, preserves and destroys the universe, a Person of infinite power.

Can God be seen?

Yes, surely He can be seen. One can see His forms as

well as His formless expressions. But how can I make you comprehend it?

By what means can He be seen?

Can you weep for Him with intense longing of the heart? Men weep jugfuls of tears for children, for wife, for money. But who weeps for God? So long as a child remains engrossed with its doll, the mother busies herself about the cooking or other household duties. But when it finds no more satisfaction in dolls and throwing them aside weeps and cries aloud for the mother, she can no longer remain in the kitchen. She sets her rice-pot down on the hearth, runs in hot haste to the child and takes it up in her lap.

How is it that there is so much difference about the real nature of God? Some say that He has form and some that He is formless, and again we hear of various forms from those who maintain that He is with form.

As is a devotee's realization, so is his idea of God; but in reality there is no confusion. First you should attain God somehow, then He Himself will make everything clear to you. Only he who thinks of God always, can know His real nature. He knows that He manifests in various forms, in various ways; that He is with attributes and also He is the attributeless Absolute. Kabir used to say: "The formless Absolute is my Father and the God with form is my Mother."

He appears in just the form in which His devotee desires to see Him. Is He not infinitely gracious towards His devotees! But form and all things disappear before the reasoning of Vedanta. The final conclusion of that reasoning is that Brahman (the Absolute) alone is true and the World of name and form is false. So long as you have the feeling that "I am a devotee," it is possible to comprehend

God as a person and see His manifestation in various forms. But Brahman or the Absolute is without any attribute according to Vedanta. What His real nature is cannot be expressed by words. Yet so long as you feel your personality real, the world also is real and real are the different forms of the Divine manifestation—real also is the perception of God's personality.

GOD AS DIVINE MOTHER.

By Sister Devamata.

Whenever we take away any aspect of God,—Father or Mother, Friend, Child or Beloved, we impoverish religion and lessen for mankind the universality of Godhead. Each aspect meets the need of some soul striving to gain a closer relation with the Divine and to eliminate any one means to deprive that soul of its natural approach to the Supreme. There can never be a uniform conception of God. Try as men may to establish it by church canon or presbytery, every worshipper will restate the accepted definition to himself and out of it form his own Deity. We must never confound God with our idea of God. Your God and my God are not God. God is Unchangeable, our God is constantly changing; God is Infinite, our God, pictured by our finite consciousness, is of necessity finite; God never increases or diminishes in glory, but our God grows in majesty and power as we grow. He is the reflection of our own highest point of vision, as much of the Infinite as we grasp at any moment by our partial but evolving perception. As, however, we enter into a deeper union with this God of our conceiving, we make it possible for the Supreme Lord to reveal Himself to us. It becomes, therefore, a vital problem of the spiritual life to establish the closest possible communion with the God we perceive, and

this is most quickly and easily done by creating a definite relation with Him—that relation which meets the strongest need of our nature.

There is no relation so universal and natural to mankind as that of mother and child. God as Mother would seem therefore to be the most spontaneous conception of Deity for the human race at large; yet in all cosmologies we find it preceded by the idea of Father. That which beat upon man's awakening consciousness was evidently the vastness and force of creation—the endless stretches of ocean and plain and desert, the fierce play of the elements, the ravages of storm and fire and flood, all the manifestations of power which awe and frighten. The Vedic Scriptures tell first of an Absolute Being which was neither darkness nor light, neither great nor small, neither aught nor naught, an undefinable mysterious Mightiness, designated by the neuter term *Brahman*. From this rose the first Lord of creation, *Brahma*, a more defined embodiment of power. But something else was needed to satisfy the human consciousness, something more definitely creative, and so there grew the mother idea. This is the natural story of creation, —the formless taking form as power or the Father and becoming creative under the form of the Mother. The account of Genesis gives the same order,—first God Almighty, then Adam, then Eve. These three,—Fatherhood, Motherhood, and the Absolute in which both inhere, may be said to constitute the Trinity of creation.

In Christian theology the feminine element was never given a place; but throughout the Vedic teaching it has always been carefully preserved and at times even emphasized. The female figure beside the Deity in all temple images in India bears witness to this fact. Even in the earliest Aryan Scripture, the Rig-Veda, the Supreme is

spoken of as Mother as well as Father; in the Bhagavad-Gita the Lord declares: "I am the Father of the Universe, the Mother"; while an ancient Sanskrit prayer runs: "Thou art our Mother, Thou art our Father, Thou art our Friend and Companion." The Divine Mother of the Indo-Aryans, however, is a cosmic Mother; She does not always come with sweetmeats in her hands. She is the great Creative Force of the universe,—now preserving, now destroying; now caressing, now punishing; manifesting through every phenomenon of creation, terrible or benign. No phase of Indian teaching has been so grossly misunderstood by the West as this universal character of the Divine Mother, represented most often by the figure of Kali—to the Occidental a hideous idol, to the more subtle Oriental a graphic metaphysical symbol of the creating Mother.

Kali is depicted a dark blue, because blue seems everywhere the color of vastness in nature. She stands on the body of her husband to indicate that all manifestation must rest on the Absolute, as waves on the ocean; and because the Absolute is unchanging, immovable, unaffected by creation, He lies apparently lifeless and unconscious of Her presence. Not only does She stand there, but She dances. Why? The Vedas tell us that "Out of bliss the universe has come." Creation is a joy to the Mother, as the painting of a masterpiece is a joy to the artist. The leap of the flame, the rush of the storm, the swirl of leaves in the autumn wind, the bursting of buds on the hillsides, these are the play of the Mother. Do we not all know the delight of the strong muscle, of the keen intellect, of every free expression of power or intelligence or beauty? Four arms too She must have, because fewer would not suffice to do all that She would do for Her children. Yet She is not always a tender Mother, for while with one hand She protects, with

the other She slays. She is a Mother who makes strong by discipline, who purges by pain, who takes away that She may give more abundantly. And through it all She laughs and laughs loudly, because She knows that Her glistening floating veil of creation but thinly masks the Eternal Fact of Being; that as out of the rotting tree trunk springs a new and richer vegetation, so out of a thousand deaths rises life untouched, out of countless sorrows emerges the Soul triumphant. If in the darkness of a crushing grief or failure this image of the Mother could take form before us and we could see the hand that blesses beside the hand that strikes, at once we would grow quiet and wait in patient confidence for the Supreme Maternal Love and Wisdom to accomplish in us the work of purifying and perfecting.

There is also a profound natural reason for laying stress on the Motherhood of God,—the mother relation is the one sure and clearly defined relation in nature. We may not know the father of any being born into the world, but the mother is always known. It is she who carries close to her heart the new life through the months of its pre-natal unfolding and an unseen cord binds the child to her through all the years of its earthly existence. To her seems primarily entrusted the care of this treasure of manifested being and to her in peculiar measure is given the wisdom to preserve it. In the home too the father is often absent, but the mother is always there, to share in the play and soothe the pain, to clothe and feed and put to rest. It is the mother who answers the cry at night, for her heart never sleeps; and it is the mother who forgives when all others condemn, who believes when all others doubt. Buried deep down in the subconscious mind of every being is the recognition of this fundamental fact of human experience; if it can be drawn out and turned to account in the religious

life, it will become a powerful factor in helping men gain a more real sense of their relation to God.

Take the mother out of any home and what a sad denuded place it seems! So a universe without a Mother is always a sad universe. There is not the same sense of the fireside, of real homelikeness. For that reason wherever the mother idea has not existed, we find a little emptiness in religion. No doubt it was the recognition of this fact that led the Roman Church to raise an altar to the Virgin Mary. And what joy and solace has She brought to numberless lonely paining souls down the centuries! The bounty of that Supreme Mother none can doubt. Nature stands as Her visible symbol. As much air as we would breathe, there is always ample store. When we would eat, from the ground springs food. If we would sleep, some unseen gentle hand passes over us and we fall away from all our troubles into quietness and rest that only the mother can give. If She makes us labor for what She bestows, it is only because She knows that labor is a blessing, that it is the idle aimless child who soonest wearies of the game of life. Do Her children anywhere lack for plenty, it is because they have turned away from Her and created an artificial world of their own.

When She thus supplies all our outer wants, how much more will She provide our inner needs, for She is above all the Mother of our souls. As when a little one is born into the world, there is born also in some woman's heart the love and patience and understanding to watch over it; so when we are reborn little children in the Spirit, it is the Great Divine Mother's heart which enfolds us, it is Her strong arms which carry us into the kingdom of the Highest. And only as we become Her little children can we enter there. Never for one moment does She leave us. If we

will but look up with childlike trust, always shall we see Her smiling face bending over us, always shall we hear Her tender voice, feel Her soothing touch and be conscious of Her guiding wisdom. She is never weary of correcting us, nor does She ever grow impatient with our blunders or tire of our childish importunities. The more we run to Her with our little joys and troubles, the more we seek Her companionship in our loneliness and share each hour's experience with Her, the nearer will She draw to us. And if we can give ourselves up wholly to Her as loving humble children should, then will She unveil Her face and reveal to us Her Eternal Universal Being as "the Sustainer, the Way, the Witness, the Abode, the Refuge, the Friend, the Origin, the Dissolution, the Resting-Place, the Storehouse and the Seed Eternal." Thus beholding Her in Her transcendent glory, the last remnant of our ego will be wiped out and through Her Supreme Grace and Blessing we shall know the Absolute.

MOTHER KALI.

By Zina Barton Partridge.

Mother Kali, Mother Kali,
Sweetest of Thy many names,
Hear me calling, hear me calling,
I'm weary of life's earthly games.

Mother Kali, Mother Kali,
Blind Man's Buff has lost its charm,
From mine eyes the veil has fallen,
Death for me has no alarm.

Mother Kali, Mother Kali,
I can see Thee, everywhere,
Watching o'er Thy wayward children,
Giving each Thy loving care.

Mother Kali, Mother Kali,
I am coming home to Thee,
Steep the path, the pitfalls many,
But the light Thou gavest me,
Softly on the shadows falling,
Points the way, eternally.

Mother Kali, Mother Kali,
In that haven I shall rest
Every longing, every yearning—
Understood my earthly quest;
Satisfied, serenely tranquil,
At one with Thee, forever blest.

THE UNIVERSE AND ITS CAUSE.

By P. S. Rao.

That there is no effect without a cause is an axiom scarcely applicable to the theory of the creation of the universe, if by creation is understood that the universe was brought into existence out of nothing. It is, however, impossible for us to conceive a transition from non-existence into existence. Every effect must be co-existent, nay co-eternal with its cause. In fact no cause can be really creative; everything contains within itself its effect, which is equally eternal with it and which needs only issue from the cause in order to come into existence. In the same manner the transition from existence into non-existence is equally impossible. A complete annihilation of any substance can never be effected, as there is no process by which a substance can be reduced to nothing. The utmost that can be done is to change the form or the bulk of the substance and reduce it to the smallest possible particles, but nothing beyond that. Then as particles the substance remains amid

all changes of chemical composition or decomposition until by some natural or artificial process these minute particles are reformed into some shape or other.

We thus see that the words Creation and Dissolution can have no value except when they are applied to phenomena, for such natural substances as are simple primary atoms, as well as natural forces, are eternal and uncaused and therefore imperishable. When, however, they are compounded, this aggregation is an event having a beginning in point of time and will consequently be variable and perishable. Hence we are in this sense perfectly justified in seeking for the cause of the phenomena of the universe, or for the cause of the fashioning of the universe in its present form out of pre-existing materials. Now the question is, what were the materials and causes which led to the production of this universe? The first thing that strikes us in nature is Force. Through its action all forms seem to have come into existence. Hence it is clear that Force, or Energy as modern science would have it, must have been pre-existing. Secondly, we find that Force can effect nothing except when it is connected with external and material objects. Consequently Matter must have been pre-existing also. And thirdly, though Force and Matter may be the substantial causes of the universe, yet it is evident that they are incapable of producing phenomena if they remain apart from each other. It is only when they act in concert that they can give rise to any phenomenon. There must therefore be something else to effect this union between Matter and Force, and this something is called the efficient cause of creation. Further, this cause, to be able to control and govern Force and Matter and to accomplish this great work of the universe, must be an Almighty, All-knowing, Conscious Being.

Such seems to be the natural and logical train of reasoning regarding cosmic manifestation. As to what preceded it, the Rig-Veda, the most ancient sacred writing we have on this subject, describes thus the state at the moment prior to creation: "Then was there neither entity nor nonentity; nor world, nor sky, nor aught above it; nothing, anywhere, involving or involved; nor water, deep and dangerous. Death was not; nor was there immortality; nor distinction between day and night. But *Tat* (That) breathed without afflation, single with *Swadha*, who is sustained within Him. Other than Him nothing existed which since has been. Darkness there was; this universe was enveloped with darkness, and was undistinguishable, like fluids mixed in water; but that mass, which was covered by the husk, was produced by the power of contemplation. First desire was formed in His mind and that became the original productive seed, which the wise, recognizing it by the perceptive power in their hearts, distinguish in the nonentity as the bond of entity."

The term nonentity used here must not be confounded with "nothingness," for the Vedic Seers never accepted the idea of creation out of nothing. In the Chandogya-Upanishad it is plainly stated: "In the beginning there was that only which is—one only, without a second. Others say, in the beginning there was that only which is not, one only, without a second; and from that which is not, that which is, was born. But how could it be thus? How could that which is, be born of that which is not? No, only that which is was in the beginning, one without a second." The Bhagavad-Gita tells us that "everything which is produced in nature, is produced from the union of matter and spirit"; and the Vishnu-Purana further explains: "He that produces this union is God, who is other than matter and

spirit." This unifying Supreme is defined in the Yajurveda Aranyaka as "the inner-Soul of all existences, seated in the heart of all embodied beings; He is the Director of all creation; and all creatures become one in Him." Such is a brief view of the Vedic teaching regarding cosmic creation. Now let us consider for a moment some other systems.

The metaphyiscal side of Buddhism is shrouded in so much mystery that it is no easy matter to say what its followers hold. It is certain, however, that they look upon matter and soul as eternal and they also recognize a Supreme Force, but not a Supreme Being, a Personal God. Christianity admits the distinct existence of matter and soul, separate from the Supreme Soul. To use the words of Professor Monier Monier Williams, it admits "a Personal God ever living to supply the free grace and regenerating spirit by which human nature is re-created and again made God-like, and through which man becoming once again pure in heart and still preserving his own will, self-consciousness and personality, is fitted to have access to God." Considering certain passages in the Bible, the question arises whether creation was effected out of nothing, or out of pre-existing materials. The second conception has been held by a number of well-known theologians and commentators, but even these do not deny that the Bible in some places seems to teach creation out of nothing. They contend, however, that the word translated "to create" in the first verse of Genesis signifies merely "a remodelling of the Universe from matter already in existence." Even those, such as Justin Martyr and others, who believe that matter also was created by God, hold that there must have been an indefinite interval between the creation of matter (chaos) and the subsequent arrangement of all things. Therefore when the universe was given its present shape, matter was in existence; so it may

be said that even according to Christianity the universe was made out of existing materials. As for Judaism and Mohammedanism, their cosmogony is founded on the same Mosaic account as that on which the Christian idea of creation rests.

All these various explanations of the universe, while differing with regard to the external nature of Matter and Force, agree in recognizing the necessity of a creative power. Science too in the final analysis is driven to the same point, for even if it is conceded that the Energy or Force inherent in Matter is capable of generating something, this does not account for the direction which it may take. The explosion of gun powder is a sufficient cause for the movement of the bullet, but certainly not for the bullet travelling eastward rather than westward, or hitting a tiger instead of a man. Some further element is needed to explain the facts of nature. Indeed, that nothing happens without an efficient cause is the law for philosophers and scientific men alike. The man of science readily admits that there is no such thing as the annihilation of Matter or Force. If then Matter is eternal and Force constant, why may we not likewise believe in the eternal existence of a Creator who combines the two to form the universe? Herbert Spencer says that "evolution is the manifestation of a power absolutely inscrutable to the intellect of man"; and Haeckel in his *History of Creation* writes that "most materialists even at the present day are inclined to give up the attempt at natural explanation and take refuge in the miracle of inconceivable creation." Darwin himself declares that "there is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or one form." It must be admitted that there are numerous and apparently conflicting forces at work in the universe,

and yet there is order and harmony in nature. How can this harmonious condition be accounted for but by the recognition of one great Master Force which controls and harmonizes all?

REPORTS.

Swami Paramananda has returned from the Pacific coast. After completing his second course of public lectures in Los Angeles, given in connection with the Vedanta Centre organized by him there, and also a supplementary course in Santa Barbara, he was still persuaded by the members to remain for another week in order to hold a few more meetings. He left on the 24th of October and reached Boston in time to conduct the Sunday Service on the 29th. The subject of his first address was "Spiritual Ideals of the Vedas." He will now resume charge of all the Classes and Services at the Boston Centre.

* * *

The Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Home of Service at Benares has just reached us. The hospital has added five new wards, yet the public demand for further accommodations is so incessant that the Home is sending out an urgent appeal for funds to erect still other buildings. During the twelve months under review 13,345 persons were cared for by the Home, which represents an increase of 12 per cent as compared with last year. A number of old people also received help either in their own homes or at the Branch Refuge at Dasaswamedh.

* * *

We regret to learn that while the famine has so far abated in certain districts that the Ramakrishna Mission has been able to close certain of its Relief Centres, it has broken out in other places and the workers are eager to go to the aid of the starving poor. During the six weeks covered by the last report the Relief Stations had given food to 5066 persons, the work having been carried on in 411 villages.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

The Message of the East

DECEMBER 1916

Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE

1 Queensberry St., Boston, Mass. U. S. A.

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Entered as second class matter May 1, 1915 at the post office at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1879

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NOTICE

THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST with this number completes its fifth volume. The marked increase of interest and appreciation expressed during the past year gives us new encouragement to continue, despite the added difficulties which confront all publishers at the present moment. There will be no change except that two numbers will be omitted during the summer months. Nearly all periodicals derive their chief revenue from advertisment, but in order to maintain the distinctively spiritual character of THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST we have been unwilling to introduce that element and must in consequence look wholly to subscribers for the needed support. We therefore appeal urgently to all those who value this publication to lend us their active cooperation for the coming year by securing new subscriptions among their friends.

Present subscribers are requested to renew their subscriptions without delay.

THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

VOL. V. DECEMBER, 1916. No. 12.

WHAT IS A SAVIOUR?

By Swami Paramananda.

Although this world is God's world, permeated by God's love, yet we often lose sight of that side which represents Godhood and are conscious only of the side which represents matter. When our life thus becomes overwhelmed with materialistic thought and we lose the balance between the spiritual and the material, then a mighty character comes to readjust it, and He comes in human form because as long as we are human we can only understand a human being. What is a Saviour? He is one who manifests the attributes of God more than of man. It is that which makes Him stand out from among all and which leads men to take Him as their Ideal. There are various conceptions in the world regarding a Saviour. Christians call Jesus of Nazareth the Saviour of mankind. The Hindus also have a similar conception of incarnations, Great Ones who bring light from heaven and make heard the voice of God, but they do not limit it to one personality. There are many on the other hand who protest against the idea of looking upon any human being as God. They say: Why should we worship Divinity second hand? It is true that Infinity can never be represented by any one finite human being; but, to use the words of Hegel, "it is not the individuality

of the subject that is revered but that which is universal in him, and which among the Thibetans, Hindus and Asiatics generally, is regarded as the essence pervading all things."

As a matter of fact these Saviours of mankind do not come to be worshipped. They come lowly, humbly, as servants of men. They never raise their own voice or seek their personal glory. They love to glorify God's name only and to give His Message. But there is a profound reason why devout souls reach out to such mediators and offer them their worship, because they find in them something definite and tangible to follow. When we speak of an all-wise, all-loving One, what is our conception? When we hear of purity, charity, humility, can we have as clear an image of them in the abstract, as when we see them exemplified in a living character?

Before we denounce the idea of God Incarnate we must weigh our own power. Can any one of us stand up and say he is self-sufficient, that his judgment is unerring, his strength unfailing? No; therefore we need someone who typifies in the highest degree all the spiritual qualities, which without the help of such tangible examples would seem unattainable to suffering, struggling man. Why can we not make our own image of God? Because it is impossible for us with our finite mind to conceive of Infinite Spirit. Whatever we might imagine would fall far short of the Ideal as shown in the life of a Christ or Buddha or Krishna. So it is not a weakness to accept these great Teachers and try to follow their lives. There are lesser saviours, great men who have brought freedom to their own country or their own people; but the Divine Saviour is a Saviour of mankind. He comes to save human beings from their ignorance. Yet even such a Saviour cannot bring salvation to one who is not open to spiritual influences.

The number of such Saviours cannot be limited. The universe is infinite, so whatever is needed for the universe must be without limit. Whenever and wherever there is a need of spiritual readjustment, the Infinite takes finite form. Nothing, it is true, exists without God; whatever we see or do not see is part of the All-pervading Spirit; but sometimes in order to reach mankind more directly He manifests Himself as a personal being. Yet He is always the Unmanifest, the Universal, the Impersonal and Absolute. This conception of God frees us from all sectarian bias and we are able to bow our head before any Divine Manifestation, because we can see that they are all rays of the one Supreme Effulgent Sun. Nor does this lessen the value of any one Saviour. The Spirit of God can never be any the less mighty however often It may descend to lift men out of the mire of delusion. God is an All-loving Father. He cannot bear to see His children struggling in the dark, so whenever they are in distress He sends His Son to lead them back into the path of holiness and purity.

We must not foster the narrow idea that the world was in darkness before Jesus of Nazareth came, or that the lofty teachings given by Him were uttered for the first time. Those very words had been spoken many times. He Himself indicated this when He said, "I came not to destroy but to fulfill." This is the mission of all Saviours of mankind. They come to unveil Divinity, to destroy all distance between God and man. Through them we learn that God exists, that He is close to us, that we can talk and walk with Him; that the prayers we offer Him are not thrown into an infinite void, but that they are heard and answered by a real and infinitely loving Being.

A Divine Incarnation may be defined as the focussed light of God. God's light shines everywhere, but in the

Saviour it shines with concentrated power and seeing it we gain new trust in ourselves, in God and in life. What such an embodiment does during His earthly mission is only a small portion of His work. The mark of His holy life is felt and its effect grows in magnitude as time passes. It is after He is gone that people begin to think and understand His message. As the human side melts away, the Divine becomes more and more apparent and the world gradually realizes that He is only a personal manifestation of the Impersonal Absolute. A Saviour represents the highest aspect of the Cosmic Soul so far as it is possible in human form. All forms are limited and though God is infinite, when He enters form He must take on limitations; but the form that He assumes is such as will contain the largest part of the Supreme. He takes flesh that He may manifest the glories of the Atman or the Highest Self. He is full of all the blessed qualities that can be revealed through human embodiment, and as our thoughts dwell upon Him we gradually absorb these qualities and become daily more imbued with His unbounded spirit of love and unity. Thus through His influence we are drawn closer and closer to the great Cosmic Soul. When at last Its light fully illumines our heart, all limitations fall away and we realize our oneness with the Omnipotent Father.

Choose ye to be good and not base. Between the opposing spirits let the wisely-acting choose aright; choose ye not as evil-doers. Splendid things are garnered up for residence in the good mind. Wisdom is the shelter from lies, the destroyer of evil spirits. The prudent man wishes to be only where wisdom dwells. . . . Wherefore, O ye men, learn the blessings that are in store for the righteous.

Zoroaster.

WORDS OF GREAT TEACHERS.

Those who are full of desires for self-gratification, whose discrimination is stolen away by the love of power and pleasure and who are deeply attached thereto, (for such people) it is impossible to obtain either firm conviction or God-consciousness.

That man attains bliss who, abandoning all desires, moves about without attachment and longing, without the sense of "I" and "mine." This is the state of dwelling in Brahman (Absolute Truth); having attained this, no one is ever deluded. Being established in this knowledge, even at the end of life, one attains union with the Supreme.

Sayings of Krishna.

The world is full of sin and sorrow because it is full of error. Men go astray because they think that delusion is better than Truth. The worldling will not understand the doctrine, for to him there is happiness in selfhood only, and the bliss that lies in a complete surrender to Truth is incomprehensible to him.

Happy is he who has overcome all selfishness; happy is he who has found the Truth. Those who fail to aspire for the Truth have missed the purpose of life. Blessed is he who rests in the Truth, for all things will pass away, but Truth abideth forever. Have faith in the Truth and live it.

Sayings of Buddha.

I stood in the midst of the world, and in the flesh was I seen of them, and I found all men drunken, and none found I athirst among them, and my soul grieveth over the sons of men, because they are blind in heart.

Let not him who seeks cease until he finds, and when he finds he shall be astonished; astonished he shall reach the kingdom, and having reached the kingdom he shall rest.

New Sayings of Jesus.

The man immersed in worldliness cannot attain the knowledge Divine. He cannot see God. Does muddy water ever reflect the sun or any surrounding object?

Cry unto the Lord with a yearning heart and then thou shalt see Him. The rosy light of the dawn cometh before the rising sun; likewise is a longing and yearning heart the sign of the God-vision that cometh after. The one thing needful in order to see God is to love Him heart and soul. *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna.*

CHRISTIANITY AND VEDANTA.

By S. E. Waldo.

In endeavoring to enter briefly upon a comparative study of Vedanta and Christianity, I wish first to thoroughly make clear that such study in no way enters into a question of merits, but simply deals with the available facts in each case, setting them side by side and endeavoring to gain from an unbiased comparison such lessons of toleration and sympathy as they may be able to teach us. People are every day growing to understand the value of such study and nothing connected with the World's Fair at Chicago is likely to have a greater or more lasting effect upon mankind than the impetus given in this direction by the Parliament of Religions then held. Long, long ago, however, nearly three hundred years before the birth of Jesus, the famous Buddhist King Asoka, who then ruled India and was perhaps one of the greatest and noblest of her many great and noble rulers, called together a religious convention, where all the religious sects of those days could meet in harmony and love to set forth their respective views and learn from one another.

After that, King Asoka sent missionaries into all the then known world and the records show that these Buddhist monks reached as far West as Antioch and Alexandria. But the most beautiful thing about the sending of these missionaries was the advice given to them by the great king who sent them. The very words have been preserved to us all these centuries, having been cut into rocks in a language so old that only of late years have the inscriptions been deciphered. And they are models for every nation and every religion to copy, though we of the West have been accustomed to regard those good old Buddhists as "heathens," and have only in a few instances and very recently come to perceive that in many respects they were far our superiors. In all ages and under all circumstances the Hindus have stood for perfect tolerance in religion. Save by their various conquerors, there has never been any such thing as religious persecution in India. When, then, the noble King Asoka sent out his missionaries, he charged them to disturb no man's religion; but if they found any whom they could help, to do so; and to teach them with love and sympathy, but never with harshness. How different the methods of conversion often employed by the followers of Jesus!

When we study Christianity from the historical standpoint, what do we find? We find a book that teaches that over one thousand nine hundred years ago was born in Judea a child who grew up to be a great Teacher of His people, and whose name today is known all over the civilized world. Upon the sanction of His words as recorded in this book is founded the authority for all the doctrines and teachings of the Christian religion. This is the reason why the church has always so vigorously opposed anything that could weaken the historical nature of the religion it teaches. Too much

is made to rest on the question of the actual historical existence of Jesus, that is, upon a personality instead of upon a principle. And this is true of all the great religions that are built up around a particular person or founder. If the historical account of the life of such a person can be seriously shaken, the whole system of doctrines built on the personality is shaken too. This is one great advantage possessed by Vedanta. It rests on eternal principles, not on persons. All the great religious teachers that have come in India, even all those recognized there as Divine Incarnations, have been merely illustrations of these eternal principles, which exist quite independent of these living illustrations and which would continue to exist if these embodiments of their everlasting truths had never come before mankind. The Swami Vivekananda says:

"Every one of the great religions in the world excepting our own is built upon such historical characters, but ours rests upon principles. There is no man or woman who can claim to have created the Vedas. These are the embodiment of eternal principles; sages discovered them, and now and then the names of these sages are mentioned, just their names; we do not know who or what they were. But what cared they, these sages, for their names? They were the preachers of principles; and they themselves, as far as they went, tried to become illustrations of the principles they preached. At the same time, just as our God is an impersonal and yet a personal God, so is our religion a most intensely impersonal one, a religion based upon principles, and yet it has an infinite scope for the play of persons; for what religion gives you more Incarnations, more Prophets and Seers, and still waits for infinitely more? The Bhagavad-Gita says that Incarnations are infinite, leaving ample scope for as many as you like to come. It

is vain to try to gather together all the peoples of the world around a single personality. It is difficult even to bring them together around eternal and universal principles. If it ever becomes possible to bring the largest portion of humanity to one way of thinking in regard to religion, mark you, it must always be through principles and not through persons."

The Hindus are, most of them, willing to accept Jesus as an Incarnation among other Incarnations, but not to regard Him as the only one the world has ever known. This is where Vedanta shows its marvellous breadth, in its full recognition of the actual unity of all religions. In fact, what Vedanta recognizes is religion itself, not any particular expression of it. It grasps the principle of religion, and leaves each special religion to work this principle out in the way best adapted to the needs of the people and the period that have produced that special religion. This universal toleration and acceptance in Vedanta is what makes Hinduism appear diverse, even polytheistic, to superficial observers. To the Vedantin this diversity simply indicates that variations in external forms are necessary and inevitable among different grades of development. To assert that there is only one way of seeking the Infinite God seems to him an unwarrantable and somewhat arrogant assumption of wisdom.

Among the Hindus dates and names and other historical facts receive but little attention. The thing said is of so much vaster importance to them than the name and date of the speaker or even the place where it was said, that these details are frequently overlooked altogether. An utterance is valued for its intrinsic worth and gains but little additional weight or force from the name of him who uttered it. In the West, it is apt to be exactly the opposite

way and an utterance is of importance just in proportion to the position of the person making it. We have already seen that Vedanta is not dependent upon the historical existence of any person or upon the teaching of any founder for its spiritual and ethical sanction. Neither is it bound to any book, nor to any special revelation. "With it revelation is a perpetual stream that never ceases to flow." Revealed knowledge does not crystallize into something final, but is expected to be eternally obtained by man and to be suited to his growing needs. Vedanta places the basis of religion in the nature of man himself. It recognizes that in reaching the ultimate goal of all thought and reason, a final unity must be found; that the Self, the Absolute, can be but One, and that therefore God and man are essentially one. Not only so, but this unity of existence must include all being. "That which exists is One, Sages call it variously" is a basic truth in Vedanta.

Surely here is to be found a common basis for all religions, and it is not unreasonable to hope that the time may come when harmony in religion may prevail all over the world—not harmony in modes of worship, but harmony in the great essentials that will lead to wise and loving toleration of the differences in external forms of expression. When once we have grasped this idea of the absolute oneness underlying all the variety to be found in the world, no more can there be hard feelings that another does not see life through just the same spectacles as ourselves. Then the name of the particlar religion we profess will be of trifling importance. All the religions can then work in harmony for the spiritual uplifting of mankind, sure that each has the same end in view, and that creeds and doctrines and ceremonials and names are but the "outer crust," covering yet not hiding the Reality behind them all.

Because Vedanta is founded on principles and not on personality, it is the one religious philosophy of the world which has nothing to fear from science. It includes three stages as natural evolutionary steps. It has a copious mythology and a most extensive and varied ritual, but behind all these and supporting them is a wonderful philosophy, the real foundation of the whole structure. No "higher criticism" will ever shake that to its foundations. There have been in our time grave discussions as to the validity in the Christian religion of the Eden myth and of Jonah and the whale. From the tenor of some of the views advanced by clergymen all over the country, one would suppose that the latter was one of the bulwarks of Christianity! Those more advanced thinkers in our pulpits who dare proclaim that Christianity rests upon a basis more substantial than the literal fact that a great fish swallowed a man and after three days was glad to part from him, are even looked upon with doubt and distrust by their brother preachers. The weakness of a merely historical religion could not be more forcibly shown. The grand truths contained in the teachings of Jesus would be none the less great even were the whole of the Old Testament swept away. They can afford to rest on their intrinsic worth without being bolstered up by any "authority" whatsoever; and it is owing to the fact that appeal to authority has been supposed to add to their weight and value, that the feeling is now so prevalent that whatever undermines the authority must of necessity undermine Christianity itself. God forbid that it should have to rest upon such a foundation as that!

We have to learn that "things are in the Bible because they are true, and not true because they are in the

Bible." We must recognize that in our Scriptures too we have the three stages,—ceremonial, mythology, and a little philosophy. That there is any of the latter at all is due to the influence of Greek thought. All the Aryan races are given to philosophical speculation, but not the Semitic; and Christianity includes the Old Testament as well as the New. The former is really a record of how the Hebrews arrived at the concept of Monotheism; how Yahveh or Jehovah developed from the God of a desert tribe into the One God of all the worlds, the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings. The very titles prove the fact that from being one among many Yahveh gradually grew to be the One and Only God. One by one, theology has had to let the old traditions slip! It was hard to let the story of creation in six days out of nothing pass into the realm of mythology, and even yet many still cling to it as direct revelation. Slowly, slowly the theologians are learning that instead of weakening the tree of spiritual life, it grows stronger through having the dead branches lopped off; that with the removal of bonds and fetters it makes a larger, freer growth; and that really religion has nothing to fear from any source, if it will only be its own authority through the inherent truth of its essential facts, instead of trying to support itself on any extraneous authority whatsoever.

For some the Christ-ideal is the highest; and especially is this the case in the West, because it has been evolved here and it fits in with our aspirations and modes of thought. But surely we can love Jesus and strive to live a life in accordance with His teachings without any quarrel with our brother of the East, who finds his aspirations realized in Buddha or Mohammed or some other great Teacher. If all those "who profess and call themselves Christians," would only devote themselves as faithfully and earnestly to the practice of their belief as do the Mohammedans and

Hindus and Buddhists, they would undoubtedly develop a spirituality far in advance of anything that has ever been known in Christian lands and which would go far to make real the song of the angels, "Peace on earth, and good will to men." If we loved God more we should assuredly love our fellow creatures more, and that love would bring the recognition that all mankind are brothers, children of one God; and carried to the highest point, such love would lead to the realization that God and man are one.

THE DOCTRINE OF INCARNATION.

Adapted from The Brahmavadin.

"The doctrine of the Divine Word is Platonic; the doctrine of the Incarnation is Indian; of a divine kingdom is Judaic; of angels and demons is Magian." This remark about the eclectic nature of Christian doctrine is quoted from no less a personage than the great Cardinal Newman. The distinctly Judaic contributions to the doctrines of Christianity are indeed of the least metaphysical value; and the doctrines here attributed to the Platonic and Magian sources are also Indian doctrines, as every careful student of the Veda and the Vedanta knows. The doctrine of Incarnation is wholly against the genius of the religion of the Semites. The Jews could understand that their prophets were divinely inspired, but it has been to them from the first a stumbling block to realize the divinity of Christ. To their minds it has always appeared to be equal to blasphemy to think of any man, however great and however good and however full of divine inspiration, as being an incarnation of the Divinity. The Jehovah of the "chosen people" dealt with them and even now is supposed to deal with them in the way in which the shepherd deals with the sheep of his flock. Can the shepherd ever become the sheep?

Even if he can, will he? The God who is far far away from and altogether other than man cannot and will not become man. Even when the shepherd's love for the sheep is infinite and perfect, the most favored among them cannot be said to have become the same as the shepherd.

While Christianity considers Jesus to be an Incarnation of God, the religion of Islam thinks of him only as a prophet; and even Mohammed is only a messenger of God to the Musselmans. The narrowly anthropomorphic and tribal conception of God which the Jews and the Arabians retained, even after their religions ceased to be local and tribal, is responsible for their incapacity to comprehend the truth and beauty of the idea of Incarnation. The Christian Church also, still under the influence of Judaism in this, recognizes only one instance of Divine Incarnation. But to understand properly the rational metaphysical foundation of the doctrine of Incarnation even in regard to one case of actual Incarnation is to see its possibility in many others.

We have no doubt that almost every student of Christian theology knows that there is a close connection between the doctrine of the Divine Word and the doctrine of Incarnation. The indebtedness of the Christian Church to the Platonic philosophy of the Alexandrian Jew Philo is a well known matter of history. "His *Logos* is the Divine in the Universe—it is an exteriorized God; it is the legislator, the revealer, the organ of God as regards spiritual man. . . . Philo has no idea of the Messiah, and establishes no connection between his *Logos* and the divine being which was dreamed of by his compatriots in Palestine. . . . The end of man is to know the *Logos*, to contemplate reason; that is to say, God and the Universe. By that knowledge man finds life, the true manna that nourishes." Such is

the statement given by Renan of the doctrine of the Divine Word as found in Philo; and clearly it is the establishment of a close connection between the Platonic *Logos* and the Jewish Messiah that has led to the narrowing of the vision of the Christian Church in regard to the doctrine of Incarnation. The Christian Clement of Alexandria is said to have borrowed largely from Philo, and Professor Max Muller says: "To him (Clement) the whole history of the world was a divine drama, a long preparation for the revelation of God in man. From the very beginning man had been a manifestation of the Divine Logos, and therefore divine in his nature. Why should not man have risen at last to his full perfection, to be what he had been meant to be from the first in the counsel of the Father?" It is easy enough to see that both the Jewish Philo and the Christian Clement must have believed in the oneness of the human and the divine natures, for they both give a highly rational and universal meaning to the Logos and come very near indeed to the Vedic conception of God and creation. If these essential doctrines of the Divine Word and of Incarnation are foreign to the genius of Judaism, it certainly cannot be said to be the true mother of Christianity. To us it seems to have very effectively played the part of the stepmother.

Of the two well-known living religions in the world which believe in Incarnation, namely, Christianity and Hinduism, it is conceded on all hands that the former has borrowed this vitally important doctrine from outside. It must be borne in mind that the Platonic doctrine of the Logos did not give rise to the doctrine of Incarnation in Greece itself. It was the focussing of all elevated Asiatic religious influences, particularly those of India, in the schools of thought of Alexandria that made it possible to associate the idea

of Incarnation with the idea of the Divine Word, so as to lead people to suppose that the one is a necessary corollary of the other. Historically, however, the Christian Church does not seem to have derived the idea of the Incarnation from the idea of the Logos, although such a derivation is philosophically both possible and reasonable. St. Clement's idea that God becomes man in order that man may become God is as old as the Indian Vedas. The Vedic idea of creation itself is that it is an act of Divine manifestation.

The Vedanta indeed is most explicit in its conception of the whole universe as embodied Divinity. Thus it leaves no impassable gulf between man and God as the religions of the Semitic peoples do. To the Vedantin there is nothing strange in God becoming man or in man becoming God; for, according to him, they are both of like nature. The one duty that the Vedanta imposes on every man is that he should try to attain to Godhood. And it believes that when the despotic distance between man and God is reasonably abolished, then all worthy men will realize the strength and responsibility of the divine dignity of their nature, and will show to the world by the unmistakable example of their lives that the fact that God becomes man is not more certain than that man may become God.

Hebrew religion, fervent and spiritual as it was, emphasized *separation* between God and the world, especially the world of man. It was the shrinking of the soul before its own ideal; and these seeds of fear and alienation in the religious sentiment grew into debasing theologies which no imperfect bridgework of mediation or atonement can permanently redeem. Hindu belief emphasized *oneness* of God with the world; even in the play of illusions seeking fearlessly for the reality they disguised. It lacked the awe

the Semite felt in presence of his own conception of the Infinite. . . . Its ground was faith, not fear; and now when the Semitic religion, mature enough to dispense with schemes for "reconciling God and man," affirms, as its starting point, the immanence of deity, it is simply resuming in a higher plane, and with practical insight, the truth which early Aryan philosophy instinctively divined.

Samuel Johnson.

THE NATIVITY.

By Sister Devamata.

The striking similarity in the stories of the nativity as given in the lives of the various Saviours, and prophets even, has led to a belief among many that one account is borrowed from the other, the followers of each Teacher claiming that their narrative is the original source from which the incidents of all others are drawn. But there is no reason to infer such poverty in the cosmic scheme. The great facts of nature, infinitely varied though they may be in detail, all move along similar broad simple lines in their fundamental plan. We do not look upon one storm as the copy of another, nor do we regard the panorama of one spring or autumn as borrowed from the previous one. Like phenomena naturally reproduce themselves in ways that are closely akin, while remaining independent manifestations of power.

The same truth holds good with regard to the coming of the Great Teachers. It would be impossible for them to enter our sphere without creating a profound impression upon every part of it. We have all felt the disturbance in air or earth or water caused by the passing of a large locomotive engine or an ocean steamer; we have even seen

the atmospheric conditions wholly transformed by a loud explosion, yet how much mightier must be the effect produced by the coming of a God-infilled Soul. No one can hope to measure the vast displacement it represents in nature, or how far-reaching must be the influence it exerts on all animate and inanimate creation. What wonder then that new sights and sounds are perceived in earth and sky, or that into the hearts of men is breathed a new sweetness of love and pity? The psychological effect may seem to us less legendary than the outer signs recorded, but the cosmos is so closely bound together, its planes so interlaced, that the song sung in the heart can as easily be sung in the heavens and the blossoming of holier thoughts in the mind can find its counterpart in the humble flowers along the roadside. Dante tells in his *Purgatorio* how when a soul passes over into Paradise the mountain of purification quivers and a shout of joy is heard from all those toiling up its steep slopes. Why then should not a thrill of gladness shoot through the world and men and angels sing when One takes birth who will lead countless souls to final liberation?

That both inner and outer nature rejoice whenever a Redeemer descends to earth is the universal testimony of all those who bear witness to their coming. On the night in which Sri Krishna was born, we are told, the forests blossomed, dry pools were filled, flowers fell in fragrant showers and from the upper air sounded celestial music. It was in a prison that he came. The tyrant Kamsa ruled in Dwaraka and his subjects grievously oppressed were watching anxiously for a deliverer. It had been prophesied that the eighth child of his sister's marriage would destroy the ruling sovereign. Terrified the king had slain one by one all the children born to her and now the hour ap-

proached for the birth of the eighth child. To prevent any possibility of escape the anxious parents were thrown into a dungeon and a strong guard set to watch them.

At last in the stillness of the night Sri Krishna was born. As he came forth from his mother's womb a bright light shone in the dense darkness of the dungeon and the wondering parents for an instant beheld him transfigured in his divine form. Then seeing him once more a little baby in their arms, they bethought them of the impending danger. "Carry him," said Devaki, "to Gokula and give him to our good friends Nanda and Yasoda. They will care for him." With unquestioning faith the father, Vasudeva, lifted the child from her arms, and as he did so the iron chains dropped from his feet, the gates swung back and he walked unhindered past the sleeping guards. That same night a child was born to Yasoda and Nanda; but while all in the house slept soundly, Vasudeva exchanged the children and returned to the prison. Kamsa informed of the child's birth came and seized it, but as he did so it slipped from his grasp and vanished. Realizing that he had been outwitted, the king sent forth an order to slay all new-born children in his kingdom. Sri Krishna however escaped; and to protect his precious life, Nanda and Yasoda gathered together their herds and subjects and led them to Vrindavan, where the young child grew in strength and beauty, beloved of all who knew him.

Like Sri Krishna, Buddha came of royal lineage. In the sixth century before Christ there ruled in Kapilavastu a Shakya king called Shuddhodana. His wife Mayadevi had lived until her forty-fifth year childless and given to a holy life. Then finding that motherhood was approaching, she besought the king to send her to her father's house; but as she journeyed through the garden of Lumbini the

hour of deliverance overtook her. Her couch was placed beneath a lofty satin-tree and there in the shadow of its branches she gave birth to a royal son. As he came forth, it is recorded, the three worlds were flooded with a radiant light, the blind received their sight, the deaf heard, the dumb spake, the lame walked, chains fell from the imprisened, the beasts in the jungle grew still and from out a cloudless sky there sounded the glad singing of angelic voices. Even the evil-minded felt love in their hearts and only Mara, the Tempter, rejoiced not. The Naga kings, hastening to pay him homage, scattered mandara flowers before him; an aged woman beside the mother's couch invoked the blessings of heaven upon him; while a hermit, who dwelt in a grove nearby, as he looked upon him wept.

When the king saw this, he was perplexed and inquired the cause. The Brahman replied: "Banish all anxiety and doubt. The strange omens observed indicate that the child now born will bring deliverance to the whole world. Remembering that I am old, I could not restrain my tears; for my end is drawing near. But this son of thine will rule the world. He is born for the sake of all that lives. The heavy gates of sorrow he will open, and he will bring deliverance to all creatures ensnared in the self-twined meshes of ignorance and folly." Hearing these words the royal parents rejoiced and they named their new-born son Siddartha, which means "he who has accomplished his purpose."

It was in a different age and to another people that Jesus of Nazareth came; and so, although of the royal house of David, we find him seeking birth not among kings but in the lowly cottage of a carpenter. Herod was king in Judea at the time and an edict had gone forth that a new census should be taken. Thus it was that every one

went to his own town to be registered; and Joseph went up from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea, taking with him his newly-espoused wife who was with child. While they were sojourning there, the hour of her deliverance arrived and she gave birth to a son. Because no room could be had in the inn, she swathed the young child and laid him in a manger. On that same night some shepherds were watching their flocks in the neighboring country-side, and as they watched an angel appeared before them surrounded by a great light. Seeing their fear the angel said: "Have no fear, for I bear to you good news of a great joy. This day there has been born to you in the town of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord." And about the angel there suddenly appeared a heavenly host singing "Glory to God on high and on earth peace among men in whom He finds pleasure."

Also certain wise men arrived in Jerusalem, asking: "Where is the new King of the Jews? We have seen his star in the East and have come to pay him homage." Herod on hearing this was sore troubled and enjoined the travellers to come and tell him when they had found the child. But the wise men, after they had laid their gifts before the new-born babe, because of a strange dream returned another way. Then Herod grew angry and sent out an order to put to death all male children under two years of age in Bethlehem. But Mary and Joseph had been warned in a dream and carried their son into Egypt. Such is the account of St. Matthew, but St. Luke records that when the moment of purification of mother and child was at hand they went up to the Temple in Jerusalem. There was at that time a devout man named Simeon in the Temple Courts, who when he saw the child Jesus, took him in his arms and said: "Now, Lord, Thou wilt let Thy servant

go in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen the salvation, which Thou hast prepared in the sight of all nations—a Light to bring light to the Gentiles, and to be the glory of Thy people Israel." And there was also a holy woman named Hannah who, when she beheld Jesus, began publicly to thank God and foretell about him. Then the parents with their son returned to the town of Nazareth. And the child grew in strength and wisdom and the blessing of God was upon him.

As by the Holy Spirit Mary conceived Jesus, so it is told of the mother of Iran's great Prophet that from Ahuramazda Himself there descended a Divine Glory which, entering the house where she was about to be born, united Itself with her. So radiant did It make her as the time for her pregnancy approached that people thought her bewitched. Of Sri Krishna's mother also it is recounted that "No person could bear to gaze upon Devaki, from the light that invested her." This Divine Glory dwelt with Dughdu until her fifteenth year when she gave birth to Zoroaster. A star heralded his coming, a divine light shone through the house, the very trees and rivers shared in the universal thrill of gladness that pervaded the world, and the child himself as he came forth instead of crying laughed aloud. All the powers of darkness strove to destroy him and especially violent were the attempts of the wicked ruler Durasrobo; but through Divine intervention the baby escaped unharmed.

Similar extraordinary events mark the coming of the two great Chinese Teachers, Laotze and Confucius. Of Laotze it is said that his mother conceived him at the sight of a falling star. He belonged to the Chow dynasty and Confucius also was of royal descent. At the birth of Confucius a prodigious quadruped appeared and prophesied

that the new-born infant "would be a king without throne or territory." Two dragons hovered about his mother's couch and five celestial sages entered as the child came forth; heavenly music was heard and the air was full of sweet sounds. Chinese tradition makes supernatural claims for still earlier Teachers. Fohi, said to have been born 3468 years B.C., came of a virgin mother and when she conceived him a rainbow was seen to surround her. Yu was another ancient virgin-born Chinese Sage and there were still others, all of them being designated *Tientse* or "Sons of Heaven." The Siamese also had their virgin-born Saviour called Codom, his mother having been impregnated by sunbeams while leading a life of holy retirement in the forest. Horus, regarded as a Saviour by the Egyptians, was born of the virgin Isis, and all the mighty figures of Greek tradition are represented as having come from a human mother impregnated by Divine power.

The idea of virgin birth, it would appear therefore, is peculiar to no one faith or Saviour, but has existed from most ancient times in all the different religions of the world. Whether myth or fact, this shows that it must rest on some fundamental truth. It seems indeed to spring from an intuitive recognition of the law that only one who is absolutely immaculate of heart and life can give birth to the Divine. There can be no doubt that in that one only who has transcended every passion and desire and who stands at the last boundary line of the human, can the Highest take form. Equally true is it that in every soul which reaches that state of perfect selfless purity the Christ Spirit must be born. And when this birth takes place, for that soul all nature will blossom and heaven and earth will perpetually sing a glad song of praise and thanksgiving.

REPORTS

Through November Swami Paramananda conducted all the services and Classes at The Vedanta Centre of Boston and he will continue to do so until the eleventh of December, when he will return to the Centre in Los Angeles established by him last summer. The Swami will probably remain in the West through the mid-winter months and during his absence Sister Devamata will be left in charge of the Boston work. In view of the Swami's early departure, a reception was given at the Centre in Boston on the evening of November 28th, at which a large number of friends were present. A delightful programme of harp music was rendered by one of the devoted members, besides which there were various impromptu speeches. The evening closed with refreshments and pleasant social intercourse. All the meetings will continue as usual at the Boston Centre throughout December.

* * *

The Fifteenth Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service at Kankhal, Hardwar, has just reached us. It shows a large increase in the number of patients treated, the number this year reaching 13,213. As the hospital is chiefly designed to bring relief to the multitudes of pilgrims who come every year to Kankhal, people from every part of India have found shelter and care in the Home. During the great religious festival known as the Kumbha Mela the resources of the hospital were so overtaxed that trained workers were called from similar institutions belonging to the Mission at Vrindavan, Allahabad and Benares to assist the local body; also volunteers from Calcutta. The work was carried on with great devotion and many pilgrims owe their lives to it. In connection with the Home of Service is a Night School for the very poor where 40 boys are now receiving instruction.

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